



Very sincerely yours

Alex. Keith

THE  
EVIDENCE OF PROPHECY.

*Historical Testimony*

TO THE  
TRUTH OF THE BIBLE,

BY THE  
REV. ALEXANDER KEITH, D.D.

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NEW AND REVISED EDITION.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS treatise is an abridgment of a larger work, entitled "Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion, derived from the literal Fulfilment of Prophecy; particularly as illustrated by the History of the Jews, and by the Discoveries of recent Travellers." Since it was first prepared, "the lands of the Bible" have been visited by innumerable travellers, and the records of discovery have been vastly multiplied. There has thus been an enlargement of the evidence from manifold additional facts, but it is not necessary to make a corresponding enlargement of the present treatise.

One chief feature of the book was to make unbelievers the leading witnesses, their testimony



being unexceptionable and conclusive. Volney did not visit Palestine as a devout pilgrim, nor was he even a believer in inspiration or the fulfilment of prophecy. Neither was Burckhardt, who never alludes to the prophecies, and was himself a sceptic. The testimony of such men has more force than that of many who visit and describe the scenes of sacred history expressly for the purpose of finding confirmation of Scripture.

Some illustrations from the travels of later date have been added, but in the limited space of this little work, intended for wide circulation, the strength of the argument would not be increased by substituting new witnesses for the old. Additional testimonies of recent travellers will be found in the larger volume from which these pages have been abridged.

*Alex. Reim*

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## ORIGIN AND PLAN OF THE WORK.

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DR. ALEXANDER KEITH was born in the manse of Keith-hall, Aberdeenshire, in 1791; the son of the Rev. Dr. Keith, minister of that parish. He studied at Marischal College, Aberdeen. In 1813 he was licensed as a preacher of the Gospel, and three years later was ordained minister of St. Cyrus, in Kincardineshire. The ordinary duties of a Scottish rural parish afford few events of public interest, but Dr. Keith, at an early age, obtained world-wide reputation as an author.

His first book was published in 1823, "Evidences of the Truth of the Christian Religion, derived from the literal fulfilment of Prophecy, particularly as illustrated in the history of the Jews, and by discoveries of modern travellers." This work soon took its place as a standard treatise on the "Christian Evidences," and, after passing through a vast number of editions, and being translated into many languages, it is still the best popular treatise on the subject.

Of the origin of this work Dr. Keith has given an interesting account. In his youth, when engaged in other

duties, and having no thought of ever writing a book, he had a long discussion with a disciple of the infidel David Hume, on the evidences of Christianity. Hume, as is well known, maintained that a miracle was something contrary to the laws of nature, and as the laws of nature are constant, a miracle is impossible. Keith's sceptical opponent rejected all testimony as insufficient to prove a miracle, and he could not appreciate the internal or experimental evidences of the truth of the Bible. Unable to make any impression on the mind of his companion by the usual arguments, Keith said he could prove the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures from existing facts. Little conversant as he then was with the subject, he knew enough of Volney's work on the "Ruins of Empires," and of modern travels, to enable him to appeal to actual geographical facts, as well as to the present condition of the Jewish race, as being literal fulfilments of prophecies whereby God, as of old, had confirmed his word. Hume's argument was of avail no longer; and the sceptic, in altered tone, was constrained to confess, "I cannot answer you."

Forty years afterwards, Dr. Barth, of Wurtemberg, meeting Dr. Keith at Stuttgart, and speaking of the sceptical literature which much pervaded Germany, said, "Our Rationalists are very angry with you, because they cannot answer you." In fact, although the work has been widely circulated in all parts of the world, and the evidence of the inspiration of Scripture from comparison of prophecy with existing facts is generally known, no answer or refutation has ever appeared from the pen of any sceptic.

It was a graceful and well-merited compliment, echoed by the thousands who heard it, when Dr. Chalmers, as moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843, thus addressed Dr. Keith, who had presented to the house a "Report on the state of the Jews." "Dr. Keith,—It is with no ordinary feelings that I return you the thanks of this Assembly for a Report, the hearing of which has been a source of the highest gratification, and the composition of which must have been a congenial employment to yourself. 'Keith on the Prophecies' is a work which has not only been highly valued, and recognised in our halls of Theology as holding a high place in sacred literature, but is to be found in almost every home, and is known to every family as a household word throughout our land. I cannot help remarking, in a single proposition, my gratification that the care of this document should have fallen into your hands; a document wherein is shown the state and prospects of the Jewish people, within whose courts the voice of prophecy gave utterance to predictions, of which she has received all the past, and where she is likely to receive all the coming fulfilment. I cannot conceive a greater charm than, in passing from one locality to another, to observe the monumental evidence of Scripture, and to have what you had for many long years merely heard now made the subject of ocular observation, thus verifying the Scripture, 'As we have heard, so now have we seen the city of our God.'"

The allusion of Dr. Chalmers was to Dr. Keith's then recent travels and explorations in the lands of prophecy.

In 1839, the Church of Scotland appointed a deputation to visit the Jews, not in Palestine only, but in various parts of Europe. The deputation consisted of Dr. Keith, Professor Black of Aberdeen, the Rev. Andrew A. Benar, and the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne. The two latter published the details of their proceedings in a work widely known, "Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews," printed in 1842. Dr. Black and Dr. Keith left their companions in Syria, and returned by Constantinople and the Danube. Detained at Pesth by illness, Dr. Keith was enabled, through a series of remarkable providences, to establish an important mission to the Jews in Hungary. At that time a watchful jealousy, both in political and ecclesiastical matters, prevented any open movement for the spread of the gospel in any part of the Austrian territories. Dr. Keith, however, found a congenial friend and generous protector in the late Archduchess Maria Dorothea, Princess Palatine of Hungary. Dr. Keith has published, in the *Sunday at Home* for 1867, a memoir of the good Archduchess, and an account of the beginning of the Mission, which has since become of importance, not only on account of the work among the Jews, but as having been the means of revival of the ancient Protestant Church in Hungary. When Dr. Keith was first at Pesth not more than two or three evangelical pastors were known throughout the whole kingdom. There is now not a Presbytery throughout the Hungarian Church where the gospel is not preached.

In 1844, Dr. Keith again proceeded to the East, accompanied by his son Dr. George S. Keith, of Edinburgh.

They remained in Syria for five months, and travelled in different directions above a thousand miles, and along the coast from Gaza to Suadeia, at the mouth of the Orontes. They visited Jerusalem, Hebron, Petra, Samaria, Garash, Nazareth, Tiberias, Chorazin (for the first time by English travellers); discovered Zimrin, the ancient capital of the Zemarites; visited Damascus, Laodicea (Latakia), Antioch, and many other important places. Dr. George Keith was the first to take daguerreotype views of scenes in Syria, from which illustrations were given in subsequent editions of the "Evidences."

Since that time Dr. Keith has been engaged in various literary works connected with the prophecies. The following are the titles of his other chief publications:—

"The Signs of the Times, illustrated by the Fulfilment of Historical Predictions from the Days of Nebuchadnezzar to the present time."

"Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion, from existing facts and collateral proofs."

"The Land of Israel, according to the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

"The Harmony of Prophecy, concerning the time of the restitution of all things, in a comparison of the Book of Revelation with other prophecies of Scripture."

"History and Destiny of the World and the Church, according to Scripture."

In the last of these works the truth of the prophecies concerning the papacy is demonstrated by quotations exclusively from Roman Catholic authors and historians. The other prophetic works, of all of which there have



been many editions, contain statements which command general assent, but some of them also deal with topics on which there is room for diversity of opinion. But no difference can exist as to the first work, upon fulfilled prophecy, nor as to the importance of the argument as an evidence that the book containing the predictions is of Divine origin and authority. It has been owned and blessed as the means of convincing and converting many infidels, and establishing the faith of many believers. Few works in modern times have directly and indirectly proved more serviceable to the cause of truth. May its usefulness be still continued and extended! •

The argument of the "Evidences" may be briefly stated: In the ancient Hebrew Scriptures are found numerous predictions of the advent, the place of birth, the life, work, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. There are more than a hundred clear and explicit prophecies, besides the numerous typical and figurative predictions which all pointed to the same promised Saviour. All these predictions were literally fulfilled in the history of Jesus Christ. Many and varied predictions were also from time to time delivered by the prophets of God concerning different nations and cities with which the chosen people had relations, and also concerning the Jews themselves. These prophecies, often of marvellous minuteness in detail, have also been accomplished to the very letter. Whatever differences there may have been among learned men about some special predictions, the general truth of the literal fulfilment of these ancient prophecies is beyond question, and has been proved to demonstration by the

researches of modern historians and travellers. Even the enemies of the Bible have borne unwitting testimony to the truth of its predictions. Where a prophecy is admitted to be ancient, and proved to be authentic, *there* the voice of God has spoken. To this principle Jehovah himself appeals in his expostulation with the Jews of old, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me—declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done."<sup>1</sup>

The prophecies are, indeed, standing miracles, miracles of knowledge, as miraculous acts are miracles of power. Their fulfilment supplies an ever-multiplying testimony to the truth of the book of Divine revelation. "The prophecies," says Pascal, "are the grandest evidence for Jesus Christ; and of this proof the Almighty has taken the greatest care, for their fulfilment is a miracle subsisting from the beginning of the Church to the end of time. God raised up prophets during sixteen hundred years, and four hundred years afterwards he dispersed all the prophecies with the Jews, who carried them into every region of the world. There was the preparation for the birth of Christ; and as his gospel was intended for all the world, not only were the prophecies necessary for its credibility, but their dispersion was necessary also, to bring them to the knowledge of all nations."

Lord Bacon in his "Advancement of Learning," in treating of ecclesiastical history, desiderated a work which should be called the "History of Prophecy," consisting of prophecy and its fulfilment. Such a work

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xlvii. 9, 10.

should have "every prophecy of the Scriptures sorted with the event fulfilling the same throughout the ages of the world, both for the better confirmation of faith, and for the better illumination of the Church, teaching those parts of prophecies which are yet unfulfilled; allowing, nevertheless, that latitude which is agreeable and familiar with Divine prophecies, being of the nature of the Author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, and therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age."

Bishop Newton was the first to carry out this plan proposed by the great master of modern philosophy, and his "Dissertations on the Prophecies which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world," was long the standard treatise on the subject. He pointed out the great excellency of the evidence drawn from this source for the truth of revelation, in that it is a growing and ever-increasing evidence; the more prophecies are fulfilled, the more testimonies there are, and confirmations of the truth of the Scriptures. The lapse of a century has added many such confirmations, and these Dr. Keith has included in his treatise. The general plan of the work differed from that of Bishop Newton, and its special novelty and merit lay in the employment of the reports of travellers to establish the literal fulfilment of the prophecies relating to the countries which they described.

He has especially shewn the fulfilment of those pro-

phesies which declare the future fate of particular nations, and the future aspect of their countries. "This geographical argument," said the reviewer of one of the early editions of the work, "has always appeared to us one of the most impregnable strongholds of Christian belief, or rather, one of the most resistless and wide-ranging instruments of aggressive evidence. There is no obscurity in the language of the prophet; there is no variety of opinion with regard to the object in his view; there is no denying of the change which he predicts; there is no challenging of the witnesses who prove the facts of the case. The former glory of these regions and kingdoms is recorded by ancient heathen historians, who knew nothing of the fall foretold: their present state is described by recent and often infidel travellers, who knew as little of the predictions which they were verifying by their narratives. It is not a particular place which has passed away, or a particular character who has perished, for whose ora we must search in the wide page of history, and of whose description we may find so many resemblances as to become perplexed in our application. The places and the people are named by the prophet, and the state in which they now exist is matter of actual observation. The fulfilment of the prediction is thus inscribed as upon a public monument, which every man who visits the countries may behold with his own eyes; and it is expressed in a language so universally intelligible, that every man may be said to read it in his own tongue. In these scenes of Scripture prophecy we may point with triumph as to ocular demonstration, and say

to the sceptical inquirer, in the words of the Evangelist, 'Come and see.' The multitude of travellers who have recently visited the Holy Land and the adjacent regions, have furnished ample and authentic materials for the construction of an irrefragable argument. Many of these travellers have discovered no intention of advocating by their statements the cause of revealed truth, and some of them have been obviously influenced by hostility to its claims. Yet, in spite of these prejudices, and altogether unconsciously on their part, they have recorded the most express confirmation of the Scripture prophecies, frequently employing in their descriptions the very language of inspiration, and bringing into view (though evidently without design) those features of the scene which form the precise picture painted in the visions of the prophet."

In one respect the evidence derived from prophecies is stronger even than that derived from miracles. The miracles upon which the Divine authority of the Scripture partly rests, were performed in ancient times, and our belief in them depends on the testimony of others. The fulfilment of prophecy is patent to all, and is taking place before our eyes day by day. "All prophecies," says Hume, "are real miracles, and as such only can be admitted as proofs of any revelation." The possibility of prophecy might be denied, as well as the possibility of a miracle. But this denial cannot seriously be made in the face of the manifest truth of fulfilled prophecy. When Hume says that miracles are impossible, and admits that prophecies are real miracles, this admission is enough to show the baselessness of his sceptical argument. The

testimony on which miracles rest may be questioned, but with the ancient prophecies in our hand, we can decide for ourselves as to the fact of their fulfilment. If the prophecies have been fulfilled (of which there is abundant demonstration), the Scripture *must* be the word of God; and if the Scripture is the word of God, Christianity must be true.

"The light of evidence," says Dr. Keith, in the unabridged edition of his work, "though sufficient to dispel the cloud on the understanding, is yet unable to penetrate 'the veil on the heart.' Scepticism at best is not a subject for boasting. It is easy to exclude the noon-tide light by closing the eyes; and it is easy to resist the clearest truth by hardening the heart against it. Into what else *can* the want of conviction be resolved than into the Scriptural solution of the difficulty—an evil heart of unbelief?"

"But while the unbeliever rejects the means of conviction, and rests his hope on the assumed possibility that his tenets may be true, the positive evidence of Christianity convinces the unprejudiced inquirer, or rational and sincere believer, that it is impossible that his faith can be false. And when he searches out the book of the Lord, and finds that none of them do fail, he looks on every accomplished prediction, even though it be the effect of the wrath of man, as a witness of God; he knows in whom he believes; he sees the rise and fall of earthly potentates, and the convulsions of kingdoms testifying of Him who ruleth among the nations, and accrediting His Word; he experiences the conviction that

the most delightful of all truth, the hope which perisheth not, is confirmed by the strongest of all testimony—that Heaven itself hath ratified the peace which it hath proclaimed. He rests assured that prophecy came not in 'old time by the will of man, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' and although he knows not the mode of the operations of the Spirit, he sees the demonstration of this power. And taking heed thus unto the sure word of prophecy, until the day dawn and the day star arise in his heart, the true believer learns from the things that are past the certainty of the things that are to come hereafter: he rests not satisfied with a mere name that he liveth, while yet he might be dead; but having obtained that 'precious faith,' the germ of immortality, which springeth up into eternal life, he experiences the power of the world to come, and unites the practice with the profession of religion; he copies the zeal of those who spend their strength for that which is in vain, and their labour for that which profiteth not; but he directs it to the attainment of an incorruptible inheritance, for he knows that his labour shall not be in vain, while he yields obedience to that word which is the charter of his salvation, and which so unequivocally bears the seal and superscription of the King of kings."

[In February, 1880, at Buxton, where he had latterly resided, Dr. Keith passed away, full of years and honour. He retained to the last his interest in the study of prophecy, and watched its fulfilment in history.]

# THE EVIDENCE OF PROPHECY.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

THE object of the following pages is to present the reader with a short and plain view of some of the numerous instances in which the manifest fulfilment of prophecy proves that the Scriptures are given by inspiration of God.

The multiplicity and precision of the prophecies contained in Scripture is such, that no band of the most subtle deceivers could ever have pretended, or ever did pretend to any such clear and close inspection of futurity; or if, to uphold any system, they had made the trial, they would only have been forging the readiest means of detecting their own imposition; and would have left it to every succeeding event, which they had attempted to foretell, to mar their purpose, and to mark them out as lying prophets. The "*declaration of the end from the beginning*" is as sure an evidence that the word is of God, who knoweth all things, as the creation of the world at the beginning testifies that the work is of God, who can do all things.

The antiquity of Scripture is indisputable. In what



ever manner the most ungodly man on earth might scoff at the Bible, and vent all his malice against it, he cannot, except he be the most ignorant too, doubt that it has existed for ages. It is assuredly no idle tale of yesterday, like some of the wild dogmas of an atheistic creed. There are proofs of its antiquity to which no other book can lay claim. It has never been without its witnesses and its guardians, though these very witnesses and guardians have sometimes been the greatest perverters of the Christian doctrine, or even the bitterest enemies of the Christian faith. The Old Testament, in which the prophecies abound, has been preserved, with the utmost care, by the Jews in every age. It contains the code of their laws, both sacred and civil, and the record of their history during many centuries, as well as of the prophecies which looked and still look prospectively into futurity. Tacitus, the celebrated Roman historian, who lived in the first century, in referring to prophecies contained in it, speaks of the books of the Jewish priests as at that time ancient. Two thousand and one hundred years have elapsed since they were translated into Greek. They were read in the synagogues every sabbath day, commentaries on them were written; and ever since the beginning of the Christian era, copies of the Old Testament, as well as of the New, have been spread into every region, and have been multiplied without number in many languages.

But to evade all attempt at cavilling, and to set aside all possibility of doubt in the reader's mind, as to the absolute certainty that the predictions preceded the events, many existing facts—that are as capable of proof as any fact whatever, of which men can see the evidence with their eyes—shall, in the course of the following summary inquiry, be adduced to prove the precise and

positive truth, at the present hour, of the most ancient prophecies, of which also there are many that yet remain to be fulfilled.

The wonderful nature of the events which were foretold, which are the most singular and surprising that have ever occurred in the history of the world, renders unnecessary even a single remark to show that they are such as mortal man could never have foreseen. Each speaks for itself. And all of them declare, with one united voice, that the word which revealed them is indeed Divine.

The prophecies contained in the Scriptures are so numerous, and the proofs of their fulfilment so abundant, that, instead of any deficiency of evidence, the only difficulty lies in selecting or condensing them. A general view of the prophecies that have a definite and distinct meaning and that have received an express and literal accomplishment, may, perhaps, best convey, in a short compass, some representation, however inadequate to the subject, of the fulness and force of this sure evidence of inspiration. The subject cannot be exhausted after the fullest investigation, for it forms a growing evidence, and is continually gaining fresh strength as the progress of events throws fresh light on the accomplishment of the predictions. And the slightest and most superficial view that can be taken of the subject (if the corresponding prophecies and facts be but touched upon, and presented to any inquiring or candid mind, and be made a matter of reflection at all) cannot fail to show that there must be more in the word and in the work than man's knowledge and device. And if the reader shall close the perusal of this work lightened of a doubt or strengthened in the faith, would to God that he would suffer us to crave of him, in return, to leave the first

principles of the knowledge of Christ, and to go on unto perfection; to search the Scriptures as for hidden treasures; to hearken diligently to the oracles of the living God, knowing that He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of a man that He should repent; and to give all the glory unto God, that the gain may be his own.

## CHAPTER II.

### PROPHECIES CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THE coming of a Saviour, which was the hope of Israel, and the expectation of the Jews in every age, is frequently foretold throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. They represent it as announced by the voice of God to the first human pair, and as forming, from the first to the last, the theme of all the prophets. And however imperfect a summary view of such numerous prophecies must necessarily be, a few remarks respecting them shall be prefixed to the more direct and immediate proofs of the inspiration of Scripture, derived from existing facts, in order that the reader may be rather induced to search the Scriptures to see how clearly they testify of Jesus, than contented to rest satisfied with the mere opening of the subject.

A few of the leading features of the prophecies concerning Christ, and their fulfilment, shall be traced as they mark the time of his appearance, the place of his birth, and the family out of which he was to arise, his life and character, his sufferings and his death, the nature of his doctrine, and the extent of his kingdom.

The time of the Messiah's appearance in the world, as predicted in the Old Testament, is defined by a number

of concurring circumstances that fix it to the very date of the advent of Christ. The sceptro was not to depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver to cease from among his descendants, till Shiloh should come.<sup>1</sup> The desire of all nations, the Messenger of the covenant, the Lord whom they sought, was to come to the second temple, and to impart to it, from his presence, a greater glory than that of the former.<sup>2</sup> A messenger was to appear before him, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, to prepare his way.<sup>3</sup> A specified period—marked, according to similar computations in the Jewish Scriptures, by weeks of years, each day for a year,—was set, from the going forth of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, unto Messiah the Prince.<sup>4</sup> A period somewhat longer was determined upon the people and upon the holy city.<sup>5</sup> After the Messiah was to be cut off, the people of the prince that should come were to destroy the city and the sanctuary; desolations, even to the consummation, were determined, and the sacrifice and oblation were to cease.<sup>6</sup> A king did reign over the Jews in their own land, though the ten tribes had long ceased to be a kingdom; their national council, the members of which, as Jews, were lineally descended from Judah, exercised its authority and power; the temple was standing; the oblation and sacrifice, according to the law of Moses, were there daily and duly offered up; and the time prescribed for the coming of the Messiah had drawn to its close, at the commencement of the Christian era. Before the public ministry of Jesus, a messenger appeared to prepare his way; and Josephus, in the history of that time, speaks of the blameless life and cruel death of “John

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix. 10.<sup>2</sup> Hag. ii. 7, 9.<sup>3</sup> Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1; Iv. 5.<sup>4</sup> Dan. ix. 25.<sup>5</sup> Dan. ix. 24.<sup>6</sup> Dan. ix. 26, 27.

that was called the baptist," and describes his preaching of virtue, and baptism with water.<sup>1</sup> But every mark that denoted the fulness of the time, and of its signs, when the Messiah was to appear, was erased soon after the death of Christ, and being fixed to that single period, they could no more be restored again than time past could return. The time determined on the people and on the holy city, seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, passed away. The tribe of Judah were no longer united under a king. Banished from their own land, and subjected to every oppression, there was no more a lawgiver of the tribe of Judah, though Judah was he whom his brethren were to serve. Of the temple, one stone was not left upon another. The sacrifice and oblation, which none but priests could offer, altogether ceased, when the Jews had no temple, nor country, nor priest, nor altar. Ere Jerusalem was destroyed, or desolation had passed over the land of Judea, the expectation was universal among the Jews that their Messiah was to appear; and heathen as well as Jewish historians testify of the belief then prevalent over the whole East that the ancient prophecies bore a direct and express reference to that very time. And the question might now go to the heart of a Jew, however loth to abandon the long-cherished hope of his race, How can these prophecies be true if the Messiah be not come; or where, from the first words of Moses to the last of Malachi, can there be found such marks of the time when Shiloh was to come, or Messiah the Prince be cut off, as pertained to the period when their forefathers crucified Jesus?—a period which closed over the glory of Judah, and which, in the continued unbelief of the Jews, has not

Josephus's "Antiquities," book xviii. chap. v. § 2.

left, for eighteen centuries, a bright page in their history beyond it.

Though the countrymen of Christ, when he came, would not receive him; yet it was of the Jews that Jesus was to come; and the human lineage of the Messiah is as clearly marked in the prophecies as the time of his appearance. The Divinity of the person of the Messiah, and his taking upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh, is declared in the Old Testament as well as in the New. He whose name was to be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, was to become a child that was to be born, a son that was to be given.<sup>1</sup> It was the seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head.<sup>2</sup> The line of his descent, according to the flesh, and the place of his birth, were expressly foretold. It was in the seed of Abraham that all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.<sup>3</sup> It was from the midst of the Israelites, of their brethren, that a Prophet like unto Moses was to arise.<sup>4</sup> And he was to be not only of the tribe of Judah,<sup>5</sup> but also of the house or family of David. From the root of Jesse a Branch was to grow up, on which the Spirit of the Lord was to rest, and to which the Gentiles would seek.<sup>6</sup> It was unto David that a righteous Branch was to arise, a King, whose name was to be called *The Lord our Righteousness*.<sup>7</sup> And it was in Bethlehem Ephrath, in the land of Judah, little as it was among the thousands of Israel, that He was to come whose goings forth had been of old, from everlasting. And Jesus is he alone of the seed of the woman, of the descendants of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David, in whom all

<sup>1</sup> Isa. ix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. iii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xxii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. xviii. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. xlix. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Isa. xi. 1-10.

<sup>7</sup> Jer. xxxiii. 5, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Micah v. 2.

the families of the earth can be blessed; to whom the Gentiles seek, and who was born of the lineage of David, and in the town of Bethlehem.

The history of the life of Christ, by the four evangelists, is simply a record of what he said and did, and his character is illustrated by his words and actions alone. Christians have often tried to delineate it; and if in the attempt their thoughts have harmonized with the Divine records, their hearts may well then have felt, as it were, the impression of that Divine image, after which man was at first created. Even some who never sought to be the champions of the Christian faith, have been struck with irresistible admiration of the life of its Author. Rousseau acknowledges that it would have been nothing less than a miracle, that such a character, if not real, could ever have been invented. And Lord Byron not only called Christ diviner than Socrates, but in a note in one of his poems it is no less truly than nobly said, that "If ever God was man, or man God, Christ was both." But the Divine character is such, that none but a Divine hand could draw; and seeking in the prophecies what the Messiah was to be, we read what Jesus was, while He dwelt among men:

"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.—The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness."  
"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the

<sup>1</sup> *Psa. xlv. 2, 6, 7.*

earth. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.<sup>1</sup> He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."<sup>2</sup> "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."<sup>3</sup> "Thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass."<sup>4</sup> "He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his lips."<sup>5</sup> "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."<sup>6</sup> "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."<sup>7</sup> "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth."<sup>8</sup> "I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed."<sup>9</sup> "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. Men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."<sup>10</sup>

The death of Christ was as unparalleled as his life, and the prophecies are as minutely descriptive of his sufferings as of his virtues. His growing up as a tender plant;<sup>11</sup> his riding in humble triumph into Jerusalem; his being betrayed for thirty pieces of silver;<sup>12</sup> and scourged and buffeted, and spit upon; the piercing of

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xi. 2-5.<sup>2</sup> Zech. ix. 9.<sup>3</sup> Isa. l. 6.<sup>4</sup> Ps. lxxii. 12, 14, 17.<sup>5</sup> Isa. xl. 11.<sup>6</sup> Isa. liii. 9.<sup>7</sup> Isa. xlii. 4.<sup>8</sup> Isa. liii. 2.<sup>9</sup> Isa. xlii. 2, 3.<sup>10</sup> Isa. liii. 7.<sup>11</sup> Isa. l. 7.<sup>12</sup> Zech. xi. 12.



his hands and of his feet, and yet every bone of him remaining unbroken; the last offered draught of vinegar and gall; the parting of his raiment, and casting lots upon his vesture; <sup>1</sup> the manner of his death and of his burial; <sup>2</sup> and his rising again without seeing corruption; <sup>3</sup> were all as minutely predicted as literally fulfilled. The last three verses of the fifty-second, and the whole of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah—written above seven hundred years before the Christian era, and forming, word for word, a part of the Jewish as well as of the Christian Scriptures—prophetically describe, like a very history of the facts, the sufferings and the death of Christ; his rejection by the Jews; his humility, his meekness, his affliction, and his agony; how his words were disbelieved; how his state was lowly; how his sorrow was severe; how his visage and his form were marred more than the sons of men; and how he opened not his mouth but to make intercession for the transgressors. In direct opposition to every dispensation of Providence, which is registered in the records of the Jews, this prophecy represents spotless innocence suffering by the appointment of Heaven—death as the issue of perfect obedience—God's righteous servant as forsaken by him—and one who was perfectly immaculate bearing the chastisement of many guilty—sprinkling many nations from their iniquity, by virtue of his sacrifice—justifying many by his knowledge—and dividing a portion with the great, and the spoil with the strong, because He had poured out his soul unto death.

The prophecies concerning the humiliation, the sufferings, and the cutting off of the Messiah, need only to be read from the Jewish Scriptures, to show that the very

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxi. ixix.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. liii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xvi. 10.

unbelief of the Jews is an evidence against them, and the very scandal of the cross a strong testimony to Jesus. For thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, according to the Scriptures. And those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

That the Jews still retain these prophecies, and are the means of preserving them and communicating them throughout the world, while they bear so strongly against themselves, and testify so clearly of a Saviour that was first to suffer, and then to be exalted, are facts which give a confirmation to the truth of Christianity, than which it is difficult to conceive any stronger. The prophecies that testify of the sufferings of the Messiah need no forced interpretation, but apply, in a plain and literal manner, to the history of the sufferings and of the death of Christ. In the testimony of the Jews to the existence of these prophecies, long prior to the Christian era; in their remaining unaltered to this hour; in the accounts given by the evangelists of the life and death of Christ; in the testimony of heathen authors; and in the arguments of the first opposers of Christianity, from the mean condition of its author and the manner of his death, we have now more ample evidence of the fulfilment of all these prophecies, than could have been conceived possible at so great a distance of time.

But if there be any truth, the perception and acknowledgment of which should lead to a sense of its importance, or a feeling of its power, it is surely that of the cutting off of the Messiah, as making reconciliation for iniquity; or the death of Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of men. It is not merely the knowledge of his righteous

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 46.

life, and of his ignominious death, in confirmation of the word of prophecy, but an interest also in them that every sinner needs. There exists not the man, except he be alike ignorant of the spirit within him and of the Father of spirits, who could think of standing for himself, to answer for his sins, in the immediate presence of an all-holy God, and to abide the scrutiny of omniscience, and the awards of strict unmitigated justice, enforced by almighty power. Nor could man of himself, in whom sin has once dwelt, be ever meet, whatever his thoughts of immortality might be, for participating in the holiness, or partaking of the happiness of heaven. And who is there that, even in the search after divine truth, can pass by Calvary, or cast but a glance towards it, and there behold, in the sufferings of Christ, a clear prophetic mark of his Messiahship, without pondering deeply on the guiltiness of sin, which nothing less than the voluntary death of the Son of God could expiate, and on that infinite goodness and love, which found and gave the ransom, whereby, though guilt could not be unpunished, the guilty might be saved. And if he reflect upon the manner in which this vision and prophecy were sealed up, who that has a heart within him, or that can be drawn with those cords of love, which are the bands of a man, can refrain from feeling the personal application to himself of the words of Jesus,—“I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”<sup>1</sup>

But the prophecies further present us with the character of the gospel, as well as of its Author, and with a description of the extent of his kingdom, as well as of his sufferings. That he was to make a full and clear revelation of the will of God, and establish a new and perfect religion,

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 32.

was frequently and explicitly foretold.<sup>1</sup> The words of God were to be put into his mouth, and whoever would not hearken unto him, God would require it of them. He was to be given for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes. His law was to be put in the inward parts, or to be written not in tables of stone, but in the heart. And the religion of Jesus is pure, spiritual, and perfect, and adapted alike to all. It is a revelation of the whole counsel of God; it is a law which has to be written on the heart; a kingdom which is established within. The doctrine of the gospel is altogether a doctrine according to godliness. This its enemies will not deny, for it is the cause why they hate it. Its very excellence and perfection is a stumbling-block to them. There is not a sin which it does not reprobate, nor a virtue which it does not inculcate. And too pure and perfect it would indeed be for man, were not reconciliation made for iniquity, and redemption to be found from its bondage.

But the complete revelation of the will of God, which of itself would have pointed out a highway of holiness that men could never have reached, was to be accompanied with a revelation also of the grace and mercy of God, which might well suffice to show that the light was indeed light from Heaven. And while Jesus gave new commandments unto men, he announced tidings of great joy, which it never entered into the heart of man to conceive. In fulfilment of the prophetic character and office of the Messiah, he published salvation. Never was any one anointed like Christ to preach good tidings to the meek; to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xviii. 18, 19; Isa. ix. 6. 7; xlii. 6; xi. 1-5; lv. 3, 4; Jer. xxxi. 31-34; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

to the captive, the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort them that mourn in Zion; to give to those who mourn for sin, or who seek for true consolation amid the bereavements or any of the evils of life, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. And none like him ever proclaimed either the acceptable year of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> What many wise men of old sought to know, Jesus taught. What they desired to see, He hath revealed. All that He taught, as well as all that He did and suffered, bore witness of him as the promised Messiah; and that kingdom has now come nigh which the prophets saw afar off.

That the gospel emanated from Judea—that it was rejected by a great proportion of the Jews—that it was opposed at first by human power—that kings have acknowledged and supported it—that it has already continued for many ages—and that it has been propagated throughout many countries—are facts that were clearly foretold, and have been literally fulfilled. Out of Zion shall go forth the law; and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> "He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.—Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"<sup>3</sup> "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed."<sup>4</sup> "To a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship."<sup>5</sup> "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxi. 1-3.<sup>2</sup> Isa. ii. 3, 4; Mic. iv. 2.<sup>3</sup> Isa. viii. 14; lili.<sup>4</sup> Ps. ii. 2; Matt. x. 17; xvi. 18; xxiv. 9-11.<sup>5</sup> Isa. xlix. 7.

of thy rising."<sup>1</sup> "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness; a people that know me not shall be called after my name. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that know not thee shall run unto thee."<sup>2</sup> No one is now ignorant of the facts, that a system of religion which inculcates piety, and purity, and love—which releases man from every burdensome rite, and from every barbarous institution, and proffers the greatest of blessings—arose from the land of Judæa, was rejected by the Jews, persecuted by Jews and Gentiles, and yet has subsisted for many ages, and has been spread into many countries, and is outwardly owned by kings and by people as the faith of the civilized world.

The final extension of the gospel over all the earth is the theme of many prophecies;<sup>3</sup> while it is also clearly implied in others, that a long period was to elapse before the reign of darkness was to cease, or the veil to be taken off all nations. After the Messiah was to be cut off, and the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary to be destroyed, desolations, even to the consummation, and until judgment should come upon the desolator, were determined; the children of Israel were to abide many days, without a king, or ephod, or sacrifice; desolations of many generations were to pass over the land of Judæa; Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the Gentiles, and blindness in part was to happen to Israel, till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled; and a great apostacy was to arise, and to prevail for a long, but limited period, before the stone that was to be cut out without hands was to become a great kingdom, and fill the whole earth, or the last days.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lx. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lxii. 2; xl. 10; lv. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xxv. 6, 7; ii. 2; xxxv. 1; xl. 5; xlii. 4; lii. 10; liv. 1-5; lx. 5, lxv. 1; Ps. lxxii. 8, 17; ii. 8; xxii. 27, 28; Hos. i. 10; Mic. iv. 1.

should arrive wherein the mountain of the Lord's house would be finally established, and exalted above all, and all nations flow into it.<sup>1</sup> But already, far beyond the conception of man to have harboured the thought, hath the light which has come out of Judea onlightened many: already have the Scriptures been made known in a ten-fold degree more than any other book; long has He been a light to the Gentiles, and long have kings seen and arisen, and princes rendered worship to him whom man despised, and whom the Jewish nation abhorred. The Christian faith made at first its bloodless way throughout the world. And, though many a conspiracy has been formed, and many a bloody warfare waged against it, it not only stands unsubdued and unshaken after every assault, but the vain rage of its adversaries has been subservient to its extension and its triumphs. As a matter of history, the progress of Christianity is at least astonishing; as the fulfilment of many prophecies it is evidently miraculous.

In closing even this brief and very imperfect summary of the prophecies relative to the Christian faith and to its Author, are we not authorized to consider the following subjects of ancient prophecy, as bearing testimony to Jesus as the Saviour, the time and the place of the birth of Christ, the tribe and family from which He was descended, his life, his character, his sufferings, and his death, the nature of his doctrine, and the fate of his religion; that it was to proceed from Jerusalem; that the Jews would reject it; that it would be opposed and persecuted at first; that kings would, nevertheless, acknowledge its Divine authority; and that it would

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix. 27; Hos. iii. 4; Isa. lxi. 4; Luke xxi. 24; Rom. xi. 25.  
<sup>2</sup> Thess. ii. 1-12; Dan. ii. 45; Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1.

spread throughout many a nation, even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Why, then, were so many prophecies delivered? Why, from the calling of Abraham to the present time, have the Jews been separated, as a peculiar people, from all the nations of the earth? Why, from the age of Moses to that of Malachi, during the space of a thousand years, did a succession of prophets arise, all testifying of a Saviour that was to come? Why was the book of prophecy sealed for nearly four hundred years before the coming of Christ? Why is there still, to this day, undisputed, if not miraculous, evidence of the antiquity of all these prophecies, by their being sacredly preserved, in every age, in the custody and guardianship of the enemies of Christianity? Why was such a multitude of facts foretold that are applicable to Christ, and to him alone? Why?—but that all this mighty preparation might usher in the gospel of righteousness, and prepare the way for the kingdom of God; and that Christians also, in every age, might add to their “peace and joy in believing;” the perfect trust, that however great the promises of God may be, they still are sure; and that He who spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, will with him also, if His we be, freely give us all things. And if we ever read a book for any object, ought we not diligently to search the Scriptures, to see how clearly they testify of Christ? And ought not every word of such testimony to be, like all Scripture besides, profitable for doctrine and for instruction in righteousness? Let no one any longer wilfully refrain from searching the Scriptures, to see how they testify of Jesus, or from seeking the words of eternal life which may be found in them. Let each one lay to heart the thought, that the second coming of Christ, to



judge the quick and the dead, is as certain as that the prophetic tidings of his first advent—once heard afar off—have already proved true.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

THE Jews remain to this day not only the guardians of the Old Testament Scriptures, but living witnesses of the truth of many prophecies, which, in the first ages of their history, unfolded their fate until the latest generations. Jewish and heathen historians fully describe the dreadful miseries which they suffered, when all their cities were laid waste, when Jerusalem itself was destroyed in the seventieth year of the Christian era, and the remnant of their race, after an almost uninterrupted possession of Judea by their forefathers for fifteen hundred years, were driven from their country, and scattered throughout the world. A brief detail of the unparalleled miseries which they then endured may serve to connect their former history with their subsequent alike unparalleled fate, and to show that the prophecies respecting the destruction of Jerusalem are as circumstantial and precise, and were as minutely fulfilled, as those in which their more recent and present history may now be read.

The Israelites were chosen to be a peculiar people. The worship of the only living and true God was maintained among them alone for many ages, while idolatry and polytheism (or the worship of many gods) otherwise universally prevailed. But the Father of the universe is no respecter of persons. A Divine law was given to the

descendants of Abraham; and blessings and curses were set before them, to cleave to their race in every age, according as they would observe and obey the commandments of the Lord, or refuse to hearken unto his voice, and to do all his commandments and statutes. Their history, and their continued preservation as a people, is thus an express record and manifestation of the doings of Providence. To read of their calamities, is to see the judgments of God; and to compare them with the prophecies, is to witness the truth of his word. There were intermingled seasons of prosperity and triumph, or of oppression and misery, as they enjoyed or forfeited their promised blessings, throughout the long period that they dwelt in the land of Canaan. But their punishments were to rise progressively with their sins; and so awfully sinful were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, after the time of their merciful visitation had passed, and when the dark unbroken era of their miseries began, that Josephus, their great historian, and the greatest of their generals in their wars with the Romans, has recorded his opinion, that, had they delayed their coming, the city would have been swallowed up by an earthquake, or overflowed by water, or, as it was worse than Sodom, would have been destroyed by fire from heaven.<sup>1</sup> The vial of wrath was not poured out till the measure of their iniquities was full.

Instruments are never wanting for the execution of the purposes of God; nor, when needful for the confirmation of his word, is there any want of full testimony that his declared purposes have been fulfilled. There is nothing similar in history to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and to the miseries which its inhabitants

<sup>1</sup> Josephus's "History of the Wars of the Jews," book v. chap. xiii. § 6

inflicted and brought upon themselves by their savage barbarity and unyielding obstinacy. Nor was there ever any other city or country, of whose destruction, devastation, and misery, there is so clear and authenticated a detail. Josephus, himself a Jew, and an eye-witness of the facts he relates, gives a circumstantial account of the whole war, which furnishes complete evidence, not only of the truth of what Moses and the prophets had foretold, but also of all that, in clearer vision, and to the perturbation and astonishment of his disciples, Christ had explicitly revealed concerning its then approaching fate. Heathen writers also record many of the facts.

The prophecies from the Old Testament and from the New, relative to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, are so numerous, that the insertion of them at length would occupy a greater space than can here be devoted to the consideration of the subject. The reader may peruse them as they are to be found in the written word.<sup>1</sup> They require no other exposition of their meaning. Exclusive of literal predictions, frequent allusions are interspersed throughout the Gospels, respecting the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation, and the utter subversion of the Jewish state.

A nation of fierce countenance, of an unknown tongue, and swift as the eagle flieth, were to come from a distant land against the Jews—to despoil them of all their goods—to besiege them in all their gates—to bring down their high and fenced walls. They were to be left few in number—to be slain before their enemies—the pride of their power was to be broken—their cities were to be laid

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xxvi. 14, etc.; Deut. xxviii. 15, etc.; Isa. xxix. 1, etc.; Ezek. vi., vii.; Jer. xxvi. 18; Mic. iii. 12; Matt. xxi. 33-46; xxii. 1-7; xxiv.; Mark xii.; Luke xx. 9-18; xxi.; xxiii. 27-31.

waste, and themselves to be destroyed—to be brought to nought—to be plucked from off their own land—to be sold into slavery, and to be so despised that none would buy them. Their high places were to be rendered desolate—their bones to be scattered about their altars—Jerusalem was to be encompassed round about—to be besieged with a mount—to have forts raised against it—to be ploughed over like a field—to become heaps, and to come to an end. The sword, the famine, and the pestilence were to destroy them.

The Jews lived fearless of judgments like these, when they dwelt in peace, and would not listen to the voice of Jesus. They would have no king but Caesar; and they trusted in the power of the Roman empire as the security of their state. But He whom they rejected showed how God had rejected them, how they were filling up the measure of their fathers, and how all these judgments that had been denounced of old, and others of which their fathers had not heard, were to be felt by many, and to be all witnessed by some who were living then. And the Man of sorrows, whose face was set as a flint against his own unequalled sufferings, and who shed not a tear on his own account, was moved to pity, and his heart was melted into child-like tenderness, on contemplating the great crimes, and the coming calamities of the wicked, impenitent, and devoted city; and “when he beheld Jerusalem he wept over it.”

The expiration of thirty-six years from the death of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem—the death, previous to that event, of at least two of the evangelists who record the prophecies concerning it—the manner in which the predictions and allusions respecting the fate of Jerusalem are interwoven throughout the gospel—the warning

given to the disciples of Christ to escape from the impending calamities, and the annunciation of the signs whereby they would know of their approach—the unanimous assent of antiquity to the prior publication of the gospel—and the continued truth of the prophecy still manifested in Jerusalem being yet trodden down of the Gentiles—afford as full a proof as could now be thought of, that the predictions were delivered previous to the event.

No coincidence can be closer, in relation to the facts, than that which subsists between the predictions of Jesus, and the narrative of the Jewish historian. Yet, as the reader will afterwards perceive, this coincidence is not more clear than that which subsists between the testimony of modern unbelievers and those prophecies which refer to the past and present desolation of Judea.

Wars, rumours of wars, and commotions, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places, though the greatest of human evils that mortals fear, were to be but the "beginning of sorrows"—the heralds of heavier woes. Many false Christs were to appear, and to deceive many. The disciples of Jesus were to be cast out of the synagogue, persecuted, afflicted, imprisoned, hated of all nations, and brought before rulers and kings for his name's sake, and many of them were to be put to death. Iniquity was to abound, and the love of many was to wax cold, but the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached throughout the world. The abomination of desolation was to be soon standing in the place where it ought not. Jerusalem was to be compassed about with armies; a trench was to be cast about it, and they were to be hemmed in on every side. And there were to be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. These were

to be the signs that the destruction of Jerusalem was at hand. And there was to be great distress upon the land, and wrath upon the people: the tribulation was to be such as had never been. The Jews were to fall by the edge of the sword; a remnant was to be led captive in all nations; of the temple, and of Jerusalem itself, one stone was not to be left upon another, and it was to be trodden down of the Gentiles till the time of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.

These prophecies were delivered in a time of perfect peace, and yet were all fulfilled ere the lapse of a single generation. The deceptions that were practised by false Christs, or pretended prophets, occasioned some of the earliest of the commotions which soon spread over Judea. Every city in Syria became the seat of a civil war. The Jews were goaded on to revolt by the indignities and oppressions to which they were subjected under Florus, the Roman procurator. They openly rebelled at last against the Romans. These wars and rumours of wars and commotions were not confined to Syria. In Alexandria many thousand Jews were slaughtered at one time. Italy was so convulsed, that in the brief space of two years four emperors suffered death. Famines and pestilences also prevailed. There was a great mortality at Babylon and at Rome. There were great earthquakes in divers places, by which different cities were overthrown. "The constitution of nature," says Josephus, "was confounded, and no common calamities were portended." Signs and fearful sights there were which might have awed the most daring. Iniquity abounded, and even Christian faith and love decayed. The name of Christians became a signal for persecution, and a mark for hatred. They were taken before rulers and kings

Paul, deserted by false brethren, stood alone before Nero. In the persecution under that cruel emperor, the bodies of Christians, covered over with combustible matter, lighted up the streets of Rome. But though the disciples of Jesus were hated, persecuted, imprisoned, afflicted, scourged, and many of them slain, burned, or crucified, the gospel of the kingdom was preached from Spain to India, and published throughout the world. They bore unto the death the triumph of their faith; but in the judgments of God against Jerusalem not a hair of their heads perished. For the last sign was given. The idolatrous ensigns of the Romans spread over Judœa. Jerusalem was compassed about with armies. These, for a time, again withdrew. Many escaped from the city. The Christians forwarned, as Eusebius relates, fled unto Pella, in the mountains. But multitudes of others, going up to the passover, or fleeing for a temporary security of their property and lives, crowded within the walls of Jerusalem. And when the people of the prince came, (of Vespasian, who was chosen emperor of Rome while in Judœa,) there was no escaping. The city and the sanctuary were about to be destroyed; and the day of the wrath of God was come upon Jerusalem.

Jesus having been crucified, Cæsar disowned, and the sceptre departed, the Jews were without a lawgiver and a king, when the conquerors of the world came to conquer them who had proved rebellious against God and man. The robbers, who had banded together amidst the preceding commotions, and resorted to the mountains of Judœa, finding no protection from the power of the Romans, flocked to Jerusalem, and joined by the zealots and lawless mob, ruled over it. Plunder, murder, and destruction were still their work. The common provisions

of the siege were not only pillaged, but burned. Faction fought against faction, and the blood of thousands was shed by their brethren. Contests were not less frequent or severe with enemies without than with those within. The priests were slain at the altar, and their bones were scattered around it. The robbers or zealots at last hold undisputed sway. But famine soon preyed indiscriminately on all. The sewers were searched for food; girdles and shoes, and the loather from off their shields, were gnawed. The most loathsome refuse was greedily devoured. The bodies of the famished fell dead in the streets. And the most appalling fact, which soon became notorious, and the discovery of which struck the whole suffering city with horror, and the besiegers with astonishment and rage—of a lady, once rich and noble, slaying, roasting, and eating her own sucking child, not only shows with what prophetic truth and pity Jesus had bewailed the “woe of them that gave suck in those days,” and Moses had described, fifteen hundred years before, the very circumstances of the case;<sup>1</sup> but also forbids that the most callous heart should seek further witness of great tribulation, such as none could be like. Yet the infuriated Jews, though they despaired of Divine assistance, when they heard of so unnatural and monstrous an act, would not yield. Of no treaty would they hear. Discomfited by their despoliated assaults, the Romans built a wall, and hemmed them in on every side. “Crucify him! crucify him!” had once been their cry and that of their fathers, who imprecated the blood of Jesus on themselves and on their children; and surely it was upon them. Of fugitives from the famine, when taken prisoners, five hundred were crucified daily without

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxviii. 56, 57.



the walls of Jerusalem, till room could not be found for the crosses, nor crosses for the bodies. The purposed object of such cruelty failed, for even so sad and shocking a spectacle did not intimidate into submission the desperadoes who ruled over the wretched city. In the lacerated ontrails of some of the slaughtered captives, gold was discovered, which, loving it as their life, they had swallowed in the hope of escape; and the Arabians and Syrians, who were confederate with the Romans, the harpies attendant on their camps, searched within the bodies of deserters for the treasures supposed to be hidden there; and thus, in one night, two thousand were dissected.

It is painful to dwell on a tale of accumulated horrors, and the example of Jesus forbids not Christians to weep. Let it suffice to be told. Josephus relates that a hundred and fifteen thousand dead bodies were carried out at one gate during the siege; six hundred thousand in all; these were the poor, to be cast out was their only burial. Many houses besides were filled with dead bodies; they were also heaped together in every open space, till there was no ground to be seen, nor was there any place in the city but what they covered. A mixed multitude, about six thousand, perished amid the burning cloisters of the templo, or cast themselves down headlong and died; ten thousand others were there slain; the city sewers were choked up with human carcasses: hundreds of thousands, eleven, as stated by Josephus, six by Tacitus—perished during the siege, and in the sacking of the city and the attacks of the slaughterers; and when Jerusalem was given to the devouring flame, every street ran down with blood.

Jerusalem was devoted to utter destruction; her walls

were destroyed, her battlements were taken away, for they were not the Lord's. The city and the sanctuary were razed from the foundation. The passing of the ploughshare over the place where it had been, was the last act of the Romans, as consigning Jerusalem to perpetual desolation, and was also the completion of their destined work, when they had laid it even with the ground, and had not left one stone of the temple upon another, but what had been thrown down.

The Jews were slain with the edge of the sword. Exclusive of those who were slaughtered in the seditions and the siege, two hundred and forty thousand were slain throughout the cities of Judah and in the neighbouring countries, as enumerated by Josephus, who specifies the numbers that were slain in each separate place. Ninety-seven thousand prisoners were led into captivity. Many were taken into Egypt, and were there sold for slaves.<sup>1</sup> The slave marts were glutted with their vast number, till none would buy them. And on one occasion above eleven thousand captives were, through wilfulness or neglect, left destitute of food, and perished by hunger.

So closely did the judgments of God cleave unto the Jews, and so fully did they all come upon them and overtake them, that, as pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the devastation of their cities and country, every one of them was literally fulfilled.

Jerusalem was called "the city of the Lord," and Zion was his "holy mountain," where alone on all the earth praise had waited on Him. Yet the sins of Jerusalem could not be concealed from his sight. And his long-suffering patience, which had been tried in vain.

<sup>1</sup> Dent. xxviii. 68.

would not always strive even with the city, which He had chosen to put his name there. And when its iniquities had come to the full—when in the day of its visitation it would not be instructed, or made clean, or wash itself from its wickedness, though God had sent his Son to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, whose blood to all who believe, is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness—and when the Jews had rejected the Saviour, and would have other lords to have dominion over them—God would not pity nor spare it any more; his soul was avenged on such a nation; and yet his anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still; and He gave Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches. And if God spare not the natural branches, take heed that He spare not thee. If the recompense of their iniquities was paid into the bosom of the children of Abraham his friend, who art thou, or what is thy father's house, that any sin of thine should pass unpunished, if thou continue impenitent, and if thus, in the time of thy merciful visitation, the Saviour be rejected and crucified again?

The security of nations rests not in the strength of their bulwarks, for none were stronger than those of Jerusalem; nor in the abundance of their riches, for such was the wealth accumulated in that city, that, after its demolition, gold was reduced in Syria to the half of its former value. "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain;" and sin must finally be the ruin of any people. The combined sins of private individuals form the accumulated iniquity of a nation. And when these become greater and greater, the time is rapidly advancing when they rise up to heaven, and its thunderbolts can be restrained no more. There are other drunkards besides those of Ephraim, on whom judgment

was denounced, who are not less guilty than were they. And that covetousness which is idolatry, and for the iniquity of which the Jews were smitten, yet abounds. For where is the practical influence of the love of God to be seen, like that which the love of the world displays, or where is the fulfilling of the law of Christ, in bearing one another's burdens, compared with the signs of mammon's rule in each seeking his own wealth? But what the reader may ask, can one man do to avert national calamities, or to lessen the amount of the sins of any people? Were each man to repent, as in Nineveh of old, all would be saved though the threatened judgment were within forty days of its approach. And who, that continues in sin, and that thinks on Jerusalem, as it lay even with the ground, can say that, were the judgments of God to come upon his country, he would have no share in the guilt that brought them down? "I sought for a man among them," said He to whom all judgment pertains, "that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; and I found none."<sup>1</sup>

But it is not to national and temporal judgments, though they might be terrible as were those of Jerusalem, but to his own individual and eternal destiny, that every man has chiefly to give heed, that he may flee from the wrath to come, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. Every man must stand or fall to his own Master. And as an earthly king, by making a fearful example in the punishment of some, would strike the hearts of his rebellious subjects with terror, so is Jerusalem set as an example before us, to show that iniquity will not pass unpunished, and that the terrors of the Lord,

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxii. 30.

and his threatenings against impenitent sinners, shall all be executed, even as his word was true, and his wrath great, upon Jerusalem.

And it is no just reason, that, because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the hearts of men should be therefore fully set in them to do evil. Seeing that the judgment itself, against every evil work, is sure, such conduct would be to all, what it proved to the Jews, a treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgments of God. And the passing of the Roman ploughshare over the site of that desolated city, which should have been the Lord's, is but a faint emblem of that utter desolation which must come over the soul of every one, who revolts now against the reign of the Redeemer, when every false foundation shall at last be razed, every sinful pleasure be destroyed, every towering imagination that exalteth itself against God, shall be laid even with the ground, and every delusive hope perish for ever.

But while we could not leave Jerusalem in its ruins, in showing how the word of the Lord was executed upon it, without imparting some warning to those who, in a spiritual sense, are not the subjects of Zion's king, we cannot close this tale of woe without expressing the hope, that the time is hastening when Jerusalem shall no longer be termed forsaken, and that the prophetic admonition, of another import, may now be received and acted upon, even as if it were a Christian precept. Ye that make mention of the Lord, ye to whom prayer is a familiar work, keep not silence, and give him no rest, cease not from fervent importunity, till He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxi. 6, 7

And seeing that the time is come when men go not up either to Samaria or to Jerusalem to worship, but that the grace of God hath appeared, and that the true worshippers now worship the Father in spirit and in truth, let this office, dear reader, be yours; let your body be a temple of the Holy Ghost, your heart an altar to your God, and let your life, no less than your lips, show forth his praise, and be devoted to his glory. And if thus you would ever look to the Redeemer from all iniquity, as both the Author and Finisher of your faith, who once was crucified for the sins of men without the walls of Jerusalem, and to whom all judgment and power are now committed by the Father; and if you would receive the Saviour in all his offices, to teach, to atone, to intercede for you, and to rule over you by his word and Spirit; you may securely rest on that rock which is Christ, and look also to a city which hath foundations that can never be moved, whose maker and whose builder is God.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## THE JEWS.

WERE we to seek a single word wherewith to confound the adversaries of the gospel, and to confute all their arguments against the inspiration of Scripture, that word would be—the Jews. We need not urge either the peculiarity of their fate ever since the days of Abraham, a period of three thousand seven hundred years, nor the miraculous preservation for ages, since their dispersion, of their exiled, wandering, miserable race. For we have only to read a multiplicity of prophecies concerning them, as they are

written in the earliest records in the world, and without once hinting what they are, to ask whose history they relate; and there scarcely is a man so ignorant in any country under heaven, who would not answer in one word—the Jews. To all the inhabitants of the earth, the Scriptural appeal may here be made in relation to facts, of which all are witnesses; judge ye what we say. It is needful only to look to the Jews, and to hear Moses and the prophets, to know that the word must have been of God. And “he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

“I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your lands shall be desolate and your cities waste.—And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.—And ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies’ lands.—And yet, for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them.”<sup>1</sup> “And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you.”<sup>2</sup> “The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: And shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.—The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xxvi. 38, 36-39, 44

<sup>2</sup> Deut. iv. 27.

thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways : and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.—Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people. There shall be no might in thine hand. The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up ; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed away : so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.—Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.—All these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed ; because thou hast hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God :—and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things : therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things : and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.”—“ If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD ; then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you ; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought ; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxviii. 25, 28, 29, 32-34, 37, 45-48.



thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."<sup>1</sup>

"I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth.—I will cast them out into a land that they know not, where I will not show them favour.—I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known."<sup>2</sup> "I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.—I will bereave them of children."<sup>3</sup> "I will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them."<sup>4</sup> "I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds."<sup>5</sup> "I will scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries."<sup>6</sup> "They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed:

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxviii. 58, 59, 68-69.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xxiv. 9, 10; xv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. v. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. xv. 4; xvi. 13; ix. 16

<sup>5</sup> Jer. xxix. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ezek. xii. 15.

their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity.—For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him.”<sup>1</sup> “I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”<sup>2</sup> “Death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the Lord of hosts.—They shall be wanderers among the nations.”<sup>3</sup> “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.”<sup>4</sup> “Though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.”<sup>5</sup> “I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not utterly cut thee off, or leave thee wholly unpunished.”<sup>6</sup> “The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God,

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. vii. 19; Isa. lvii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. viii. 3; Hos. ix. 17.

Amos ix. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Amos ix. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. vi. 10-12.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. xlv. 23.

and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."<sup>1</sup>

All these predictions respecting the Jews are delivered with the clearness of history, and the confidence of truth. They represent the manner, the extent, the nature, and the continuance of their dispersion, their persecutions, their sufferings, their blindness, their feebleness, fearfulness, and faint-heartedness; their ceaseless wanderings, their hardened impenitence, their insatiable avarice: and the grievous oppression, the continued spoliation, the universal mookory, the inextinguishable existence and unlimited diffusion of their race.

Strong were the ties which bound the Jews to Judaea. It was not only a glorious land, the land of their fathers, and the land of promise, but they held it as the peculiar gift of Heaven, and there only could many of the ordinances of their religion be observed. And as they could not be separated from the temple, till it was blazing around them, so nothing but the strongest compulsion could tear them from their country; and the unavailing closeness with which they clung to it, and their entire separation from it, were prophetically described with strict historical fidelity; for they were truly rooted up, and plucked, and consumed from off their own land. On a desperate attempt to repossess it, when their numbers had increased, and their scattered strength was again combined, they fell by the edge of the sword in such numbers, that in the words of prophecy, and of a heathen writer, very few of them escaped. They were banished from Judaea, and, by an imperial edict, it was death for a Jew to set foot in Jerusalem, though every Gentile might tread it down.

But the extent is still more remarkable than the manner

<sup>1</sup> Hos. III. 4, 5

of their dispersion. Many prophecies described it, and foretold thousands of years ago what we now behold. They have been scattered among the nations, among the heathen, among the people, even from one end of the earth unto the other. They have been removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. They have been scattered unto all the winds, and dispersed throughout all countries, among nations which neither they nor their fathers had known—the very names of which were unheard of by the prophets, and in countries the very existence of which was unknown long after the Jews had become wanderers among the nations. They have traversed the wide world, and there is not a kingdom on the face of the earth where they are not to be found. They abound in Poland, in Turkey, in Germany, and in Holland. In Russia, France, Spain, Italy, Britain, and America, they are more thinly scattered. In Persia, China, and India, on the east and on the west of the Ganges, they are few in number among the heathen. They have trod the snows of Siberia, and the sands of the burning desert; and the European traveller hears of their existence in regions which he cannot reach, even in the very interior of Africa. From the one end of the earth unto the other, the Jews, and the Jews alone, have been scattered among the nations.

But the history of the Jews throughout the whole world, and in every age since their dispersion, verifies the most minute predictions, which clearly delineated all the marked characteristics of their stricken race. And dispersed as everywhere they are, not only does that very fact bear witness to the Divine truth of the word which foretold it, but in every land visible demonstration has been given, century after century, and is still given,

eighteen hundred years after the expulsion of the Jews from Judea, that all these judgments have come upon them, and have pursued them, and have overtaken them, which, before they entered it, were denounced against them, if they would not hearken to the voice of the Lord their God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes.

They were to find no ease nor rest among the nations whither they were to be driven. Their plagues, and the plagues of their race, were to be great and wonderful, and of long continuance. They were to be oppressed, and crushed, and spoiled evermore, &c. Various as is the history of nations, in divers parts of the world, and of the same people at different periods, that of the Jews, since their dispersion, has been everywhere the same. The first century of the Christian era saw Jerusalem laid even with the ground, their cities and their country ravaged, the Jews led into captivity, and driven from their own land—homeless wanderers throughout the world. In the second, under one Roman emperor, five hundred thousand of them were slain. They were greatly persecuted in the third by another. In the fourth they were dispersed into various countries as vile fugitives and vagabonds; and previous to their banishment from Rome their ears were cut off. In the fifth they were driven out of Alexandria, and severely oppressed and persecuted throughout the Persian dominions. Many of them, having sought in vain everywhere for rest, and having been allured by a false Messiah with the hope of regaining Judea, and subduing their enemies, rebelled against the Romans, in the sixth century; and a slaughter, like that by which their forefathers had fallen, was again renewed in Palestine. And such was the oppression of

their kindred in Africa, that they were prohibited from any exercise of their religion, even in caverns. They were grievously persecuted during the seventh century, and expelled from Jerusalem, from Antioch, and from Spain. Multitudes fled into France, where the only choice that was given them was to renounce their religion, or be despoiled of all their goods. Mohammed, at the same time, subdued the Jews who dwelt in Arabia, and, after exacting a heavy tribute, forcibly expelled them. A law was enacted and enforced throughout the Mohammedan dominions, in the succeeding century, which occasioned a double misery to many a Jewish family, whereby any child, on renouncing Judaism, and professing to believe in Mohammed, became the sole inheritor of the property of his parents and brethren. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the caliphs, or successors of Mohammed whose power extended from Spain to India, despoiled the Jews of their property by repeated exactions, closed their academies in Persia, caused them to be distinguished by a mark of infamy, and tried their endurance to the uttermost, till they fled for refuge to the deserts of Arabia. A temporary respite, throughout the greater part of Europe, from any peculiar oppression, (except those troubles and indignities to which they were ever subjected, during which time their covetousness had unfettered operation,) prepared the way for spoliations and persecutions, which continued throughout several centuries, with little intermission, and which were too multiplied to admit of detail.

It would, indeed, be fearful, as it would be endless, to tell of the unceasing spoliations and unsparing cruelties which were exercised towards them, in these dark and barbarous times, when men seem fitted, like demons, for

being the executioners of Divine wrath; and when such was the blindness and madness of the Jews, that, by their usury and covetousness, they often provoked the ferocity of their enemies, and plunderers, and murderers.

Nor can any tongue of man tell, or pen write, what trembling of heart and failing of eyes were theirs, or what sorrow of mind, what sore sicknesses of soul, what madness for the sight of their eyes that they did see, what pining away, and choosing of death rather than life, were the portion of the residue of this evil family, among the nations whithor they were driven: in the oppressions and crushings, the riflings and banishments, the miseries, and the massacres, which, time after time, were relentlessly inflicted upon them throughout Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Hungary, Turkey, Italy, and England.

Did not every account conspire in attesting the facts, the nature and extent of the miseries which the Jews then suffered in many kingdoms would be altogether incredible. "They were everywhere," as is recorded in a history of the middle ages, "the objects of popular insult and oppression, frequently of a general massacre. They were massacred, in great numbers, at Orsana, Valentia, Barcelona, and Toledo; and throughout Navarro and Arragen in Spain; in France, from one extremity to the other; throughout Languedoc, Guienne, Poitou, Touraine, Anjou, and Maine; at Trani and Naples; at Ulm, where all the Jewish inhabitants were slain; at Frankfort, where, exclusive of many who were slaughtered, 180 perished in the flames; and in different other towns of Franconia and Bavaria, where, in one persecution, twelve thousand of them perished." "At Verdun, Treves, Mentz, Spire, Worms," to use the words of Gibbon, "many thousands of them were pillaged and

massacred. A remnant was saved by a feigned and transient conversion; but the greater part of them barricaded their houses, and precipitated themselves, their families, and their wealth, into the rivers or the flames. These massacres and depredations on the Jews were renewed at each crusade." Their sufferings were no less terrible in England than throughout the continent. The whole nation united in the persecution of them. They truly were, as Sir Walter Scott describes them, "alike detested by the credulous and prejudiced vulgar, and persecuted by the greedy and rapacious nobility. Except, perhaps, the flying fish," he adds, "there was no race existing on the earth, in the air, or the waters, who were the objects of such an unremitting, general, and relentless persecution as the Jews of this period. Their persons and their property were exposed to every turn of popular fury." At Norwich, nothing could restrain the fury of the people till the objects of it were destroyed by a general massacre of the Jews. Many of them were slain at Stamford, St. Edmunds, and Lincoln, and in the isle of Ely, whither crowds of them had fled. But at York their sufferings were most appalling, and worse than death. Fifteen hundred Jews, including women and children, having shut themselves up in the castle, were refused all quarter; their silver and their gold could not save them, for they could not purchase their lives at any price, and, frantic with despair, they perished by a mutual slaughter; each father was the murderer of his wife and of his children, when death became their only deliverance. In England, at York, as in Palestine at Massada, (the last fortress which they held in their native land, where nearly a thousand perished in a similar manner,) and at Lisbon, Toledo, Nuremberg, Frankfort,



and in numberless places besides, death was chosen by them rather than life, and the fear of man overcoming all fear of God, they acted on the choice.

These dreadful persecutions were uniformly accompanied with pillage. "They were spoiled overmore. Their substance and their treasure were given to the spoil without price."

They were "bereaved of their children" by the artful policy of the Mohammedans, who bribed their children to abjure their religion, and to forsake their parents; and in a more forcible manner by Roman Catholics, who took them from their families to be brought up in monasteries—a practice which was not only sanctioned, but enjoined by the canons of different councils. When the Jews were banished from Lisbon, none under fourteen years of age were suffered to depart. "Their sons and their daughters were given to another people."

"They found no ease among the nations, neither had the sole of their foot rest," &c. There is scarcely a single kingdom from which, independent of their oppressions, they have not been publicly and repeatedly banished. From France they were seven times banished. And at one time, six hundred thousand Jews were expelled from Spain, and found nowhere either ease or rest.

They were to be "a proverb, a by-word, a taunt, a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, a reproach among all nations, and in all places, whither they should be driven." And all these they, and they alone, have been, and still are. They have in all places been subjected to innumerable indignities, which it requires the full meaning of each and all of these epithets, and maledictions, adequately to express and represent. A leathern girdle round about them, a piece of cloth of some peculiar color—

worn as to be seen of every passer-by, a clog tied to their body, and dragged behind them at every stop, or cast in derision and ignominy before them, are some of the badges of distinction, or marks of infamy, which they have often been compelled to use, and which exposed them openly, wherever they went, to every insult and mockery. And were it to be asked, what is the only by-word that is used by all nations, and common to the world, or the universal stigma that is applied in every country to a single name, the answer would rightly be, in every language, A JEW. And may we not, reader, whoever you are, appeal to yourself, and ask how often you have made use of this very proverb, and by-word; and if you must own that you have done so, times without number, must you not own also, that your own lips, however unconsciously, have as often borne witness, on your part, to the truth of this most marvellous prophecy; and that it has only to be thought upon, in order that you may as freely own that He alone who knoweth all things, could have foreseen and foretold so exclusively singular and astonishing a fact, and that in this, as in every other respect, the Jews are a sign and a wonder?

It was for their sins that they were to be punished, but covetousness was the stumbling-block of their iniquity, the removing of which has yet to prepare the way of their conversion.<sup>1</sup> The covetousness of the Jews is proverbial. Among them the most exorbitant usury is often the regular business of the rich. But the love of money is not confined to those; it is an iniquity which cleaves to their race—the very idol of their hearts. In former years, not long since passed, it was often manifested in the streets of London, for instance; frequently to

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lvii. 14, 17; Ezek. vii. 19.

the annoyance of all who pass by. And their hurried gait, their outstretched arm, their pleading voice, their care-worn countenance, their eager eye, their squalid figure, and their bending form, indicated a soul bowed down to mammon, though their traffic was so pitiful as the selling of an old garment, an orange, or a pencil. A new heart has to be given them, and a new spirit to be put within them, the veil has to be taken off, and this stumbling-block to be put out of the way, before they can see a Messiah in a crucified Saviour, or find a way to that kingdom which is not of this world.

But the greatest apparent contradictions, and contrarieties which it might well seem impossible to reconcile, are involved in their most wonderful fate, and yet each extreme tallies perfectly with its corresponding prediction. While they were to be oppressed and crushed alway, their often renewed possession of wealth is not only implied in their being spoiled evermore, but it is explicitly foretold that when they shall be gathered out of all nations, they shall take their silver and their gold with them, and inherit the riches of the Gentiles. And after all their spoliations, silver and gold are theirs in the greatest abundance. And from their large share in the funds of every kingdom in Europe, it may not now be difficult to see how they shall yet possess the riches of the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> But though the truth of His word, and

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lx. 9; lxi. 6. There is, however, a striking exception, in regard to the accumulation of wealth by the Jews, which deserves, as such, to be particularly noted. And their own land was marked as the spot where no prosperity whatever was to be theirs, when the judgments of God, on account of their iniquities, should come upon them and overtake them. "The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail," Deut. xxviii. 42-44. The abject, dependent, and impoverished state to which

the workings of His overruling Providence, be thus manifested, it is not worldly wealth that can purchase the blessing of God: for covetousness is idolatry, with the iniquity of which the Lord is ever wroth. But all however high or however low their rank, may learn from the fate of the Jews, to observe carefully that admonition, which their forefathers would not listen to from Jesus, and to the power of which they still are strangers, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."<sup>1</sup>

The Jews were to be smitten with blindness and astonishment of heart, to continue long, having their ears deaf, their eyes closed, and their hearts hardened; and to grope at noon-day as the blind gropeth in darkness. Every civilized nation professes to believe in Jesus as the Saviour of men, of whom all the Jewish prophets bore

they would be reduced *within their own land*, is here forcibly described. And their peculiar fate in it, and their mean condition there, in relation to the stranger that would possess it, represents to the life how very low the poor Jew has become in the land of his fathers, in the presence of the imperious Roman of old, or of the lordly Turk in past ages, until the present day. Although, in almost every other region, the Jews, in the exercise of their covetousness, have gained much silver and gold, yet that loved occupation has never since their dispersion been practised by them in the land of Judea. From the want both of traffic and of the security of property in that desolated country, they could neither acquire wealth nor practice usury; and hence few of them have sought to dwell there. Whenever, however, for the love they bore to the land of their fathers, any of them, when permitted, have resided in Jerusalem or throughout Judea, their condition has indeed been very low. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew who travelled in the twelfth century, states that the country which should have been their own, was then almost entirely abandoned by them. About two hundred of them, for the most part dyers of wool, lived together under David's Tower, and made there a "very little figure." They were even more sparingly scattered, and left few in number, throughout the Holy Land. In later times the remnant of the tribe of Judah in Jerusalem has continued in the same very mean and dependent state, some of them as clerks and servants of the governor, and others having no subsistence but from charity.

<sup>1</sup> Tuko xii. 15.

witness. But the Jews, though surrounded by the light of the gospel, are still in blindness and darkness; and their religious observances and opinions, as drawn from their own authorities, are the most frivolous and absurd imaginable. They have made the law of God void by their traditions. When Moses and the prophets are read, there is a veil upon their hearts. And the people that long stood alone among the nations as the worshippers of the living God, now, when light has arisen upon the world, have lost the knowledge even of their own law, and are so blinded by their prejudices, and ignorant of the divine truths revealed in the gospel, that they grope at noon-day as the blind gropeth in darkness.

Their plagues, like their incredulity and impenitence, were to be of long continuance: and, after a continuance of nearly eighteen hundred years, they are fresh upon them still, in many parts of the earth, as if they had commenced but yesterday. Throughout all the countries of the East, the Jews are, as they have ever been, the marked objects of unsparing scorn, and of unpitying cruelty. So unused are they to compassion, and so freely are they deprived of those rights which should be common to all men, that "any acts of kindness, or even of justice, exercised towards them" by any humane traveller, "excites at once, in Asia and Africa, the astonishment of the Jews, and the indignation of the natives." Many rigid laws are still in force against them throughout some countries in Europe. And it is only recently that a more liberal and enlightened policy has been acted on towards them. And who that either thinks on the great and wondrous miseries which everywhere they have suffered so long, or believes that the receiving of them shall be life from the dead to those who yet sit in darkness and in the

shadow or death, and to those also who have but a name to live, and yet are dead—can refrain from feeling a deep interest in their fate, or from cherishing an ever-earnest wish, and offering up many a fervent prayer, that the close of their long-continued plagues may be hastening on, when God shall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound? And surely it is full time to try whether Christian kindness and those efforts on which the blessing of God may be expected, may not be the means of preparing the way for their conversion, and for effecting far more, in a short space, towards that prophetic consummation of all their miseries, than all that coercive measures, or savage cruelty ever have been, or ever could be, able to accomplish.

Many prophecies concerning the Jews, of more propitious import, are reserved for testimonies to future generations, if not to the present. To them the reader is referred, as they are to be found in Scripture.<sup>1</sup> “And that throughout all the changes which have happened in the kingdoms of the earth, from the days of Moses to the present time, which is more than three thousand three hundred years, nothing should have happened to prevent the possibility of the accomplishment of these prophecies; but, on the contrary, that the state of the Jewish, and Christian, and heathen nations at this day, should be such as renders them easily capable, not only of a figurative, but even of a literal completion in every particular, if the will of God be so; this is a MIRACLE, which hath nothing parallel to it in the phenomena of nature.”

In regard to the past, as we have soon on a brief review of their miseries, the most wonderful and amazing

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxx. 2-5; Isa. xi. 11, 12; lx. 9, 10, etc.; lxi. 4; Jer. xxxi. 37-40; Ezek. xxxvi., xxxvii.; Zech. ix. 12, 13; Amos ix. 13-15; Mic. ii. 12.

facts, such as never occurred among any other people, form the ordinary narrative of the history of the Jews, and literally fulfil the prophecies concerning them. These prophecies are ancient, as the oldest records in existence. They are clear in their meaning, as any history can be. Many of them are apparently contradictory and irreconcilable to each other, and yet they are all literally true; and identified in every particular with the fate of the Jews. They were so unimaginable by human wisdom, that the whole compass of nature has never exhibited a parallel to the events. And the facts are visible, and present, and applicable, even to the most minute point. Could Moses, as an uninspired mortal, have described the history, the fate, the dispersion, the treatment, the dispositions of the Israelites to the present day, or for thirty-three centuries, seeing that he was astonished and amazed, on his descent from Sinai, at the change in their sentiments, and in their conduct, in the space of about as many days? Could various persons have testified in different ages, of the self-same and of similar facts, as wonderful as they have proved to be true? Could they have divulged so many secrets of futurity, when, of necessity, they were utterly ignorant of them all? Or could they, by their own sagacity, have foretold events that were to happen hundreds and thousands of years thereafter, seeing that, like all mortal men, they knew not of themselves what a day or an hour would bring forth? The probabilities were infinite against them. For the mind of man often hangs in doubt and uncertainty over the nearest events, and the most probable results; but in regard to remote ages, when thousands of years shall have passed away, and to facts respecting them, contrary to all previous knowledge, experience,



analogy, or conception, it feels that they are dark as death to mortal ken. Singular and unparalleled as is the fate of the Jews, their history for many ages may be read in a recapitulation of the prophecies concerning them.

After the Messiah was cut off, the city and the sanctuary were destroyed; Jerusalem was laid waste; the temple, which had previously been the place of their constant resort, was levelled with the ground; and Zion was ploughed over as a field. Their country was ravaged, and their cities were laid desolate. They fell before the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, till there were few men left, and these were despoiled, persecuted, enslaved, and led into captivity. They were driven from their own land, not to a mountainous retreat, where they might have subsisted for ages with safety, but, everywhere smitten by their enemies, they fled every way before them. They were removed into all kingdoms for their hurt, and were scattered among all nations from the one end of the earth unto the other. They were shattered to pieces like the wreck of a vessel in a mighty storm, and were scattered over the earth like fragments on the waters. They were sifted among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, and yet they have remained a perfectly distinct people, in every kingdom the same. Nowhere did they find a resting-place without an enemy soon to dispossess them; but everywhere they met the same insult, mockery, and oppression; ever bruised, but never broken; crushed always, but not utterly destroyed; disjoined and disorganized, but uniform and unaltered; weak, fearful, sorrowful, and afflicted; bereaved of their children, and often driven to madness at the sight of their own miseries, they have behold, unchanged, the extinction of many nations, and



the convulsions of all. Children have been their oppressors, and babes have ruled over them; but they have seen and survived the utter destruction of the mightiest kingdoms which enslaved them. Few in number when rooted out of their own land, they have multiplied amidst all their miseries: and the dispersed of Judah, miserable exiles for many centuries, outnumber, to this hour, the ancient population that dwelt safely in Judea, ere ever a Babylonian or Roman had entered the land of their inheritance; and were they now to return, the land would be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and place would not be found for them.<sup>1</sup> Robbed of their silver and their gold, they cleave to the love of them still, as the stumbling-block of their iniquity; and though spoiled evermore in ages past, they shall yet inherit the riches of the Gentiles.<sup>2</sup> Taken up in the lips of talkers, the taunt, and lissing, and infamy of all people, they have long continued what they are to this day, a proverb and a by-word to the whole world. How did every fact, from its very nature, defy all conjecture! and how could mortal man, overlooking a hundred successive generations, have foretold any one of these wonders that are now conspicuous in these latter times! - Who but the Father of spirits, possessed of perfect prescience, even of the knowledge of the will and of the actions of free, intelligent, and moral agents, could have revealed their unbounded, and yet unceasing wanderings; unvoiled all their destiny, and unmasked the minds of the Jews and of their enemies, in every age and in every clime? The creation of the world might as well be the work of chance as the revelation of these things. It is a visible display and demonstration of the power and prescience of God, and

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xlix. 19; Zeeh. x. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lx. 9; lxi. 6.

of the truth of His word. And, although it forms but a part of a small portion of the Christian evidence, it not only removes a stone of stumbling, such as infidels try to cast in a Christian's path; but it fixes at the very threshold of infidelity an insurmountable barrier, which all the ingenuity of sceptics cannot evade, and which all their power can never overthrow.

The anger of the Lord has not returned until He has executed, and till He has performed, the thoughts of his heart; and in the latter days we may now consider it perfectly.<sup>1</sup> Though He once caused to cleave unto him the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man; yet, when they despised His statutes, and walked contrary to him, and would not return from their own ways, He took away his peace, his loving-kindnesses and mercies from them, and cast them out of his sight. But it was not till their neck became an iron sinew, that He put upon it an iron yoke.

"What seest thou?" was the question of the Lord to the prophet, when He made to appear before him a sign of judgments that were to come upon the Jews;<sup>2</sup> and the words were repeated at every sign. And now, on a retrospect of their actual sufferings, prolonged for ages, and not yet passed from view, and when all these have been to us a sign set before us that we may see it, it is the voice of the Lord that seems to put the question again—"What seest thou?" And who so blind as not to see that the Jews stand forth among the nations of the earth as a token, a sign, a wonder, and a witness to all people? that the prophets spoke not a vision of their own hearts, but out of the mouth of the Lord; and that the sufferings of the Jews have not been by chance, but by

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxiii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. i. 11.

judgment? And when the Lord thus speaks unto thee, answer thou Him. And who so dumb as not to make confession with the lips, that this is the Lord's doing, and wondrous in our eyes; and that although the Jews would not observe his statutes to do them, nor fear the great and glorious name, THE LORD THY GOD, their wonderful plagues, and the plagues of their seed, have clearly shown that, above all, his statutes have to be obeyed, and that his great and glorious name has to be feared above every other fear?

How the most ignorant may learn that God will by no means acquit the guilty. And even those who think not of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as exemplified to the universe in the sufferings of the Son of God, by which sin was condemned in the flesh, may look and see how great is the indignation of a thrice holy God against it, as visibly exemplified in the judgments which He has executed upon the Jews. Their punishment, like their sin, is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond. "How readest thou?" If you cannot learn from thence, wherewithal can you be instructed? Here the man whose idol is the world may learn how dreadful is the curse that cleaves to covetousness. Here the boaster of privileges, which he abuses, may cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord, or to trust in unwarrantable hopes, when he thinks on the once chosen people of God looking for a Messiah, while his blood was upon their heads. Here the pride of ancestry may be humbled, in beholding the seed of Abraham, whose lineage is traced to the creation, the offscourings of the earth and the revilings of all flesh. Here the profane swearer may learn whose great and glorious name it is that he takes in vain; and, if his sin be not washed away

by the blood of Christ, what his punishment shall be when the Lord will not hold him guiltless. Here the scoffer at the threatened judgments of God may learn, from ten thousand facts, that his threatened judgments have proved true, and that none of them are ever to be mooked at; and had even he the wisdom, the feeling, and the grace, to consider perfectly the judgments which the Lord hath already executed in the earth upon a single people, not only would his ears tingle at the recital of such woes, but, looking from national to individual, from temporal to eternal punishments, from those which have fallen upon the Jews, to those which shall come on "all the workers of iniquity," his heart would quake, till the thought of his uttering another scoff at the religion of Jesus would be more fearful to his altered spirit, than the thought of all the accumulated miseries which the Jews have ever suffered. And here, at the sight of such temporal judgments, even the Christian may not only learn the more to fear the great and glorious name of the Lord his God, but may also find new reasons to prize the blessings of redemption, and to flee, with renewed alacrity, from the wrath to come.

But national judgments, though heretofore most conspicuous in regard to the Jews, and though literally fulfilled respecting them, are not confined to them alone. And in the same true and holy word in which sentence was written against their iniquities wherever they were committed, it is recorded that the Lord, who hath now long left them to be a curse and a reproach throughout the world, hath a controversy with all nations, and will plead with all flesh, and hath appointed a year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion: a time to try all that are on the face of the earth. And we cannot call this

truth to remembrance, and bear in mind, at the same time, the wee denounced against the false prophets and teachers among the Jews, who, by healing the wound of the people slightly, and by saying, Peace! peace! when there was no peace, caused them to err by their lies, and by their lightness; nor can we close our view, dim and contracted as it has been, of the judicial sufferings of the Jews, without urging the reader to think, in all seriousness, how awfully these judgments warn all to stand in awe, and sin not; how they set forth sin before us, stripped of every disguise, that we may see it in all its abomination, as in the sight of God it appears; in all its hideousness, as the child of hell; and in all its danger, to every nation now, to every individual hereafter, as linked closely to judgment, except its own fetters shall be broken, and redemption, through the Saviour, be timely found from its bondage. And where is the people, though the name of Christian be upon them, to whom Peace! peace! may be safely said? Or, who can tell that the time is not come, when these shall prove the warmest levers of their race who give the loudest warnings of their danger? As the clay is in the hand of the potter, so is the house of Israel, and every other people, in the hand of the Lord: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom," saith the Lord, "to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xviii. 7-10.

We have seen the judgments on the house of Israel. Oh that they would return unto the Lord, for He would have mercy upon them! "Thus saith the Lord; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them."

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## CHAPTER V.

### PROPHECIES CONCERNING JUDEA.

**J**UDEA, the country of the Jews, of which Jerusalem was the capital, and which was also called Canaan, Palestine, and the Holy Land, was so exceedingly fertile, that, according to Volney—an infidel writer, whose evidence will be largely adduced to prove its desolation—it was ranked by the Greeks and Romans among the finest of their provinces. Celebrated ancient authors bear the most decided testimony to the great number of towns and villages with which it was overspread, to the eminence of several of its cities, the excellence of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, whereby it outrivalled Italy in the abundance of its fruits; and to the very high degree of cultivation it had reached; from whence Syria, including Ammon, Moab, and Philistia, as well as Judea, was proverbially called a garden by the Greeks, who possessed a rich and beautiful country of their own. So highly was the beauty and fertility of Judea esteemed,

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxxiii. 25. &c.

many centuries after the prophecies had described its future and long-continued desolation.

The earth is the Lord's: and it was cursed for the sake of man, when he first sinned against God. The glorious land of Judea was likewise accursed, and "desolations of many generations" were to pass over it, on account of the sins of those who dwelt therein when its ancient inhabitants had been scattered abroad, as well as of those to whom the Lord had given it, and for whom it is still preserved, to be held by them in perpetuity, when they shall have returned unto the Lord God of their fathers.

The calamities of the Israelites were to rise progressively with their iniquities; and the desolation of their country, as well as their banishment from it, is ranked among the punishments that were denounced against them. And many prophecies respecting it, which admit of a literal interpretation, and which have been literally fulfilled, are abundantly clear and expressive.

"I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation; and I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. Your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest."<sup>1</sup>

The particular features of the desolation of Judea are minutely traced out in other prophecies,<sup>2</sup> exactly as they are described by modern travellers. The vision of the prophets was as clear as the eyesight of any who now read the history of Judea, or look upon the land: while the many vestiges of ancient cultivation, ruins abounding

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xxvi. 31-35, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. i. 7; xxiv. 1-13; xxiii. 9-15; xxvii. 10; Jer. iv. 20, 26-28; xii. 7-13; Ezek. xii. 19, 20.

throughout the land, the remains of Roman buildings and highways, the natural richness of the soil, in many places yet unaltered, agree with the universal voice of history in attesting, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that for ages after the era of the prophets, Judea was altogether different from what it now is, or from what any mortal could have conceived that, for so long a period, it ever would have become.

The land was to be overthrown by strangers; mischief was to come upon mischief, and destruction upon destruction; the land was to be desolate; there were to be desolations of many generations. After a long and uninterrupted possession of Judea by the Israelites—the Chaldeans, Syrians, Egyptians, and Romans, were successive strangers who brought destruction upon destruction, and prepared the way for more savage desolators. The history of Judea for the last twelve hundred years is well recorded by Volney. “In the year 622, (636,) the Arabian tribes, collected under the banners of Mohammed, seized, or rather laid it waste. Since that period, torn to pieces by the civil wars of the Fatamites and the Ommiades; wrested from the caliphs by their rebellious governors; taken from them by the Turkmen soldiery; invaded by the European crusaders; retaken by the Mamelukes of Egypt, and ravaged by Tamerlane and his Tartars, it has at length fallen into the hands of the Ottoman Turks.” It has been trodden down of the Gentiles—overthrown by strangers—destruction has come upon destruction.

The cities were to be laid waste. By the concurring testimony of all travellers, Judea may now be called a field of ruins. These, though in general tenantless, retain the names of their ancient cities. Heaps of



rubbish and of ruins are all that remain of Cæsarea, Zabulon, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Gadara, Tarichea, and Chorazin. Desolators have brought to perfection their destined work on those cities where Christ and his apostles lived and preached. Columns covered with rubbish, and shapeless heaps of ruins, are scattered over the whole country. These are, in some instances, extensive. The remains of Arimathea show, according to Volney, that it must have been about five miles in circumference. The ruins of Djerash (Gerasa) are described, by different travellers, as finer than those of Palmyra. But of many towns, once illustrious in Palestine, scarcely a vestige remains, they are so utterly laid waste.

The land was to be brought into desolation—to rest and enjoy her sabbaths. And while the children of Israel were to be in their enemies' land, so long was their land to lie desolate. They have been for nearly eighteen centuries in their enemies' land, and their own land is still desolate. The sword was drawn after them; and the ploughshare has rested in Judea. The most fertile plains lie untilled. The country is overrun by rebel tribes: the Arabs pasture their herds at freedom. "The art of cultivation," says Volney, "is in the most deplorable state, and the countryman must sow with the musket in his hand." Valleys, naturally the most fertile, are covered with varieties of thistles; some of the hills are scarcely accessible, so closely are they beset with thorns; the wild plants and grasses on the plains sometimes impede the traveller; and so luxuriant is their growth, that horses with difficulty pass through them; and the whole district of Tiberias, as Burckhardt, a celebrated traveller, relates, is covered with a thorny shrub. "The land mourns, and is laid waste: and has

become as a desolate wilderness. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers."

"Your highways shall be desolate."<sup>1</sup> "The highways lie waste; the wayfaring man ceaseth,"<sup>2</sup> Judea was traversed with roads in every direction; and the intercourse was incessant between its numerous and populous cities. The remains of highways, no longer passable, are still to be seen. "In the interior parts of the country," says Volney, "there are neither great roads, nor canals, nor even bridges over the rivers and torrents, however necessary they may be in winter. The roads in the mountains are extremely bad. There are no inns anywhere; neither posts nor public conveyances: not a waggon nor cart in all Syria." The same remarkable facts are stated by others. In a country where there is a total want of wheel carriages of every description, the highways, however excellent and numerous they once might have been, must lie waste; and where dangers are encountered at every step in passing over wastes that are overrun by plundering and lawless Arabs, the wayfaring man ceaseth. But let the disciples of Volney tell how his ample description of these existing facts was summed up in a brief prophetic sentence, by Moses and Isaiah; by the former thirty-three, and by the latter twenty-five centuries past.

"I will destroy your high places, saith the Lord, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation. The palaces shall be forsaken. I will destroy the remnant of the sea-coast. I will make your cities waste. The multitude of the city shall be left, the habitation forsaken, &c. The land shall be utterly spoiled. I will make the land more desolate than the wilderness," &c. The literal fulfilment

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xxvi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lxxiii. 6.

of all these prophecies is unintentionally illustrated in a single sentence by Volney: "The temples are thrown down, the palaces demolished, the ports filled up, the towns destroyed, and the earth, stripped of its inhabitants, seems a dreary burying-place."

"The generation to come of your children," said Moses unto all Israel, "that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sickness which the Lord hath laid upon it, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?"<sup>1</sup> And the same sceptic, a stranger from a far land, thus unconsciously responds to the words of the prophet:—"I journeyed in the empire of the Ottomans. I wandered over the country of Syria. I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria. This Syria, said I to myself, now almost depopulated, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages, and hamlets. What are become of so many productions of the hand of man? What are become of those ages of abundance and of life? Great God! from whence proceed such melancholy revolutions? For what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed? Why are so many cities destroyed? Why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated?" Volney asked these questions, but he knew not the explanation—"They forsook the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in the book of the Lord."

The condition of the inhabitants of Judea, as well as of the land when the house of the Lord would be for-

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxix. 22, 24.

saken, and his heritage left, and given into the hands of her enemies, is described in repeated prophecies. Many pastors were to destroy his vineyard, to tread his portion under their feet, and to make his pleasant portion a desolate wilderness; the spoilers were to come, and the sword was to devour, no flesh was to have peace; they were to put themselves to pain, but they were not to profit, and they were to be ashamed of their revenues.<sup>1</sup> It was prophesied that, when the Israelites should be scattered among the nations and dispersed in the countries, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and of the land of Israel would eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land might be desolate from all that was therein, because of the violence of them that dwelt therein.<sup>2</sup> While the ancient possessors of the land were to be scattered abroad, it was to be defiled under the inhabitants thereof; they that dwelt therein were to be desolate, and few men left. Their joyless state is thus described: "The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone."<sup>3</sup> And such, to an exact likeness, and in every respect, are those still who dwell in Judea, while the Lord has forsaken his heritage, and left it in the hands of his enemies; and while his ancients are scattered abroad. And while many other witnesses are not wanting, Volney alone gives the most copious and distinct evidence of each of the facts. And if over there was a perfectly unexceptionable and unsuspected witness:

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xii. 7-13.<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xii. 19, 20.<sup>3</sup> Isa. xxiv. 7-11.

he, in this case, is the man. He describes, at large, the pastoral or wandering tribes of Syria. They are pastors and wanderers. "The Turkmen, the Curds, and the Bedouins, have no fixed habitations, but keep perpetually wandering, with their tents and herds." So literally, on the testimony of an enemy, have "many pastors destroyed" Judea, "trodden it under foot, and made that pleasant land a desolate wilderness." He is careful of stating the revenue of the different pachalics of Syria.

In Aleppo	..	800 purses
Tripoli ..	..	750
Damascus	..	45
Acre ..	..	750
Palestine	..	—

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2345 purses. (£122,135 sterling.)

The revenue of Palestine (including Philistia and part of Judea) was gifted to two individuals, and together with that of Damascus, the least, by far, of all the rest, it formed almost the whole revenue of the Holy Land. "They shall be ashamed of your revenues." The government of the Turks in Syria is entirely a military despotism; that is, the bulk of the inhabitants are subject to the caprices of a faction of armed men, who dispose of every thing according to their interest and fancy. In each government the pasha is an absolute despot. In the villages the inhabitants, limited to the mere necessities of life, have no arts but those without which they cannot subsist. There is no safety without the towns, nor security within their precincts. The barbarism of Syria is complete. They live in a state of perpetual alarm. Every peasant is afraid of exciting the envy of his equals, and the avarice of the aga and his

soldiers. In such a country, where the subject is perpetually watched by a despoiling government, he must assume a serious countenance for the same reason that he wears ragged clothes, or, in other words, "because of the violence of them that dwell therein." Such is the testimony of Volney. They that dwell therein are desolate. They eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment. They put themselves to pain, but it does not profit them; no flesh has peace. The land is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.

Few men left. "So feeble a population in so excellent a country, may well excite our astonishment; but this will be increased, if we compare the present number of inhabitants with that of ancient times. We are informed by the philosophical geographer, Strabo, that the territories of Yamnia and Yoppa, in Palestine alone, were formerly so populous as to bring forty thousand armed men into the field. At present they could scarcely furnish three thousand." "The stranger that shall come from a far land shall be astonished at it." In the preceding words, Volney expresses his astonishment: "They have no music but vocal, for they neither know nor esteem instrumental; and they are in the right, for such instruments as they have, not excepting their flutes, are detestable." "The mirth of the harp ceaseth, the joy of the tabret ceaseth." "Their singing is accompanied with sighs and gestures. They may be said to excel most in the melancholy strain. To behold an Arab with his head inclined, his hand applied to his ear, his eyebrows knit, his eyes languishing to hear; his plaintive tones, his sighs, and sobs, it is almost impossible to refrain from tears." Their very mirth is melancholy, their very sports tend to sadness; "all the merry-hearted

to sigh, their shouting is no shouting." "Their behaviour is serious, austere, and melancholy. They rarely laugh. And the gaiety of the French appears to them a fit of delirium. They have a serious, nay, even sad and melancholy countenance." "All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone." Volney instances the Jews, to show that the character of the people is entirely changed from what it was in ancient times.—"One of the chief sources," continues he, "of gaiety with us, is the social intercourse of the table, and the use of wine. The orientals (Syrians) are strangers to this double enjoyment. Good cheer would infallibly expose them to extortion, and wine to a corporal punishment, from the zeal of the police in enforcing the precepts of the Koran. It is with great reluctance the Mahomedans tolerate the Christians the use of a liquor they envy them." The vines of Jerusalem (though Judea was "a land of vines,") are described by another traveller as "most execrable;" and by a third as "probably the very worst to be met with in any country." "The new wine mourneth; the vine languisheth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it."

The exception to this general desolation is not the least remarkable and distinguishable feature of Judea, nor the least wonderful of the prophecies concerning it. And, like the last touch of the painter, it renders the picture complete. "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. The glory of Jacob shall be made thin; and it shall be as when the harvest-man gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; yet gleaning

grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof." These words imply, as it otherwise expressed without a metaphor, that a small remnant would be left; that though Judea should become poor, like a field that has been reaped, or like a vine stripped of its fruits, its desolation would not be so complete but that some vestige of its former abundance, the gleanings of its ancient glory, would be still visible. It is even so. Whenever any spot is fixed on as the residence, or seized as the property of a Turkish aga, or of an Arab sheikh, little culture is needful, and protection only is required, that the exuberance and beauty of the land of Canaan may speedily reappear. And the garden of Geddin, abounding with olives, almonds, poaches, apricots, and figs; Napolose, the ancient Sychem, "luxuriantly embosomed in the most delightful and fragrant bowers, half-concealed by rich gardens and by stately trees;" the vale of Zabulon; rich forests on the mountains of Gilead, though the plains beneath be covered only with thistles: the valley of St. John close by Jerusalem, crowned with olives and vines, and bearing the milder fig and almond below, appear in the midst of surrounding wastes as Edens in a desert; and are just like gleanings after the full crop has been reaped, or the few berries that remain after the olive has been shaken. But who could have thought that the same cause was to produce so opposite effects; or that a few berries on the outmost branches would be saved by the same hand that was to shake the olive.

Of Samaria, the capital of the ten tribes of Israel, it

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxiv. 18; xvii. 4-6.



was foretold, "I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundation thereof." <sup>1</sup> Herod the Great enlarged and adorned Samaria. It was the see of a bishop during several centuries of the Christian era; and there are still many of its ancient medals and coins. These are the memorials of a city, which has long ceased to exist. Its stones have been poured down into the valley. One of the earliest of modern travellers described it as wholly covered with gardens; and later accounts, in like manner, tell of "the hill where once stood Samaria," and that "its local features are seen in the threat of Micah."

Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. Eighteen hundred years after this prediction was uttered by the author of the Christian faith, we still can say, The times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled, and Jerusalem is to this day trodden down of the Gentiles. In early ages after their dispersion, the most furious attempts of the Jews to recover it proved altogether fruitless. The Roman power which had plucked them from off their own land prevented them from taking root in it again. And when (under Julian, who thought that the emperor of Rome could contend with a word which had been uttered some centuries before, by one who was crucified) the Roman power was united to that of the Jews without any opposing human means, to rebuild their city and temple, and to reinstate them in Judea, the attempt, as a heathen historian and other writers relate, was effectually frustrated, in spite of every effort of the Roman soldiery,

<sup>1</sup> Mic. i. 6.

by fearful balls of fire bureting from the ground, and burning the workmen, till they ceased to contend with the fiery element. Certain it is, and this could be known to God alone, that the Jowe have never yet been reinstated in Judea, and that Jeruealem has ever since been trodden down of the Gentiles. Romane, Grecians, Persians, Saracens, Tartare, Mamelukes, Turke, and Egyptians, Arabs, and Turks again, have, ago after age, trodden it down. Tho Jowe alone, to whom the very dust of it is dear, have novor obtained possession of it. And the truth of this word alone, epoken by Jesus, whom their forefathers crucified, is an infinitely stronger proof that it is of God, than all that the author of any false religion ever uttered.

Such is now the wide-wasting desolation and misery which is spread over the cities and the land, on which the blessing of God once rested more than on any other; and so many and clear are the marks, that all the curses that were written have come upon it, as well as upon the poople, to whom, if they had not departed from the living God, it was given for a perpetual inhoritance. Think then of the Jews dwelling in peace and safety, each man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, and of the Jews scattered among all nations, and pining away in unbelief, whether outwardly poor or rich; think also on Judea, each spot a garden, and the little hills rejoicing on every side, and on Judea a desolate wilderness, and all joy departed from it; and learn to know how great is the difference, perhaps unthought of and unfelt before, between the promises and the threatenings of the Lord, or between enjoying his favour, and incurring his wrath. His promises and threatenings, not for time only, but for eternity, are now set before us all, and all have now to

determine which they will choose. Do earthly objects, which attract the eye, ensnare also the heart, and withdraw us from the love and service of God, or blind the eyes of our understandings that we walk not by faith, and look not to the word of God as it is written unto us? Then surely we may take a warning from Judea in its desolation. And if we consider it perfectly we shall find how the Scriptures concerning it were given for our instruction in righteousness. We may, at least, learn from thence that it is not the cultivation of fields, nor the erection of cities, that should be the chief object of man; that these, however fruitful, rich, and fair, would be all blasted in a moment were the Lord to breathe upon them in his anger; that His favour is the only stronghold; and that to be rich towards God is the only true and imperishable treasure. And seeing that God, who in times past and in divers manners spake unto the people by the prophets, hath spoken unto us by his own Son, how earnestly ought those who have heard, and who may ever read or hear the words, the promises, and the threatenings of Christ and his apostles, always to watch and to pray that they fall not into temptation; that they forfeit not a better inheritance than was that of the possession of the land of Canaan; and that a worse desolation may never come over their spirits than has come, since it was smitten with a curse, upon the land of those to whom Moses and the prophets still speak in vain! And how diligently ought every believer in Jesus to labour in the high and holy vocation assigned him by his Master, and day by day to cultivate, through the abundant mercy of his God, every Christian grace and virtue, till, where the barren wild of nature once was, the vineyard of the Lord be clothed with all the fruits of the

Spirit springing up unto immortality and glory, and till there be attained that moral, spiritual, and therefore higher beauty and nobler culture than the cold earth in its fairest forms can show; which no wrath of man ever can deface, which no extirminating angel will ever lay desolate, but which renders the soul, when redeemed, rescued, and separated from sin, meet to be a partaker of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away!

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## CHAPTER VI.

### PROPHECIES CONCERNING AMMON.

**B**UT other countries lie desolate besides that of Judæa; and many nations that were the enemies of the Jews have perished, while they, though not left unpunished, have not been cut off.

The country of Ammon is naturally one of the most fertile, and it was for many ages one of the most populous provinces of that part of the world. The Ammonites, or children of Ammon, often invaded the land of Israel, and at one period united with the Moabites to oppress the Israelites for the space of eighteen years, till Jephthah repulsed them; on which occasion he made that rash vow which you will doubtless recollect. David afterwards took their chief city called Rabbah; but they regained and maintained their independence till Jotham, king of Judah, subdued them, and made them pay a yearly tribute. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and carried its inhabitants captive, we find the Ammonites exulting in the miseries that befell the Jews.<sup>1</sup> In after-

<sup>1</sup> Zeph. ii. 8.

times Ammon continued to be a highly productive and populous country, and was so when the Romans became masters of that part of the world: several of those ten cities which gave name to Decapolis, in whose eastern borders we read of Christ working miracles,<sup>1</sup> were included within its boundaries. And in still later times, several hundred years after Christ, historians tell us that "this country (including Moab) was enriched by trade, covered with a line of forts, and possessed some strong and populous cities." Volney observes that "in the immense plains of the Hauran, ruins are continually to be met with, and what is said of its actual fertility perfectly agrees with the idea given of it in the Hebrew writings," that is the Old Testament. The fact of its former fruitfulness is confirmed by every traveller who has visited it. Burckhardt says: "It is evident that the whole country must have been exceedingly well cultivated in order to have afforded subsistence to the inhabitants of so many towns as are now visible only in their ruins." And Seetzen, another most intelligent and entirely credible traveller, bears witness, that "ruins are seen in every direction." We have clear evidence, therefore, of the fruitfulness and prosperity of the land of Ammon not only before but long after those prophecies were delivered which denounced its ruin. For these were chiefly written about the time when the Jews were led away to Babylon, and have ever since been a part of the sacred Scriptures.

It was prophesied concerning Ammon: "I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and a couching place for flocks. I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee

<sup>1</sup> Mark v. 20; vii. 31.

off from the people, and will cause thee to perish out of the countries. I will destroy thee. Unto the men of the East I will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations."<sup>1</sup> "Rabbah of the Ammonites shall be a desolate heap."<sup>2</sup> "The children of Ammon shall be as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and salt-pits, and a perpetual desolation."<sup>3</sup>

The researches of recent travellers, who were influenced merely by the desire of exploring these countries to acquire information concerning their geography or antiquities, and not with any view to confirm or illustrate Scripture, have presented us with the most clear, unexceptionable, and conclusive proofs of the fulfilment of these prophecies, and of the state of dire desolation to which the land of Ammon is and long has been reduced.

Give your serious attention to what follows: "Ammon was to be delivered to be a spoil to the heathen, to be possessed by the men of the East, to be destroyed, and to be a perpetual desolation." "All this country, formerly so populous and flourishing, is now changed into a vast desert." "The far greatest part of the country is uninhabited, being abandoned to the wandering Arabs, and the towns and villages are in a state of total ruin."<sup>4</sup> This traveller also tells us, that the country is divided between the Turks and Arabs, but chiefly possessed by the latter, and that the extortions of the one and the depredations of the other, keep it in perpetual desolation, and make it a spoil to the heathen. "At every step are to be found the vestiges of ancient cities, the remains of many temples, public edifices, and

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxv. 5, 7, 10; xxi. 28-32.

<sup>2</sup> Zephaniah. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xlix. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Seetzen's Travels.

Greek churches." The cities are desolate. "Many of the ruins present no objects of any interest. They consist of a few walls of dwelling-houses, heaps of stones, the foundations of some public edifices, and a few cisterns filled up. There is nothing entire, but it appears that the mode of building was very solid, all the remains being formed of large stones. In the vicinity of Ammon is a fertile plain, interspersed with low hills, for the most part covered with ruins."

"Rabbah (the chief city) of the Ammonites, was to be made a stable for camels, and a couching place for flocks." While the country is despoiled and desolate, there are some verdant valleys and tracts in it, "which are places of resort for the Bedouins (or wandering Arabs), where they pasture their camels and sheep." Mr. Buckingham, who relates this, tells us also of a building in a ruinous state, but which had been once evidently of some consequence, "into which the Arab shepherds occasionally drive their goats for shelter during the night." He relates that he lay down among "flocks of sheep and goats," close beside the ruins of Ammon, and that "during the night, he was almost entirely prevented from sleeping by the bleating of flocks." Seetzen says, "The whole way we traversed we saw villages in ruins, and met numbers of Arabs with their camels." Burckhardt also bears testimony to the same fact, which forms the literal fulfilment of a prophecy delivered when Rabbah was a flourishing and populous city.

"The Ammonites shall not be remembered among the nations." While the Jews, though dispersed among all nations, continue as distinct a people as ever, no trace remains of the children of Ammon. None now bear their

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt's "Travels in Nubia and Syria."

name: none claim descent from them. But we know from an ancient Christian writer, that they retained their name, and were a numerous people, for more than one hundred years after the death of our blessed Saviour. But the prophet Ezekiel foretold their extinction 580 years before Christ's birth. And now "they are cut off from the people. Ammon has perished out of the countries; it is destroyed." No people are attached to its soil; none regard it as their country, or are called by its name; wandering tribes of another name occupy it. "The Ammonites are not remembered among the nations." What can we say to this, but that "the Lord is a God of truth, and true are his judgments?"

Jeremiah wrote, nearly 600 years before Christ, "Rab-bah shall be a desolate heap." It had then existed many hundred years, strong by nature, fortified by art, situated on the borders of a plentiful stream, and in the midst of a fruitful country, and gave no signs of approaching ruin. How little do we now expect that London will ever become a mere heap of ruins, inhabited only by wild beasts, and that the places of its streets, churches, and fine buildings, will be open fields where cattle and sheep shall feed. As little did the Ammonites expect that their strong and splendid cities would be what they now are. Its ancient name is still preserved by the Arabs, and its site is now (writes Burckhardt) "covered with the ruins of private buildings, nothing of them remaining except the foundations and some of the doorposts. The buildings exposed to the atmosphere are all in decay." The public edifices are now also desolate, and the remains of the most entire subjected to the abuse and spoil of the wild Arabs. What a confirmation of the truth of the history and of the prophecies of the Scripture!



## CHAPTER VII.

## PROPHECIES CONCERNING MOAB.

THE country of Moab lies on the border of the Dead or Salt Sea, which covers the plain where Sodom and Gomorrah stood before their destruction,<sup>1</sup> and was generally not less fertile than that of Ammon. And it appears from Scripture to have been populous and powerful. It was the king of this land who employed the prophet Balaam to curse (as he wished) the Israelites; and out of which came Ruth, the mother of Jesse, the father of King David. Like the Ammonites, the Moabites were great adversaries of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel: and the history of these two nations is very similar, as their people seem to have resembled each other. There are abundant proofs of the ancient greatness of Moab. Captains Irby and Mangles, modern travellers into those parts, state, that "the whole of the plains are covered with the sites of towns on every eminence or spot convenient for the construction of one. And as the land is capable of rich cultivation, there can be no doubt that the country, now so deserted, once presented a continued picture of plenty and fertility." The form of fields is still visible, and the remains of highways, with mile-stones which were set up in the time of the Romans. The prophet Isaiah alludes to the fertility of Heshbon,<sup>2</sup> and these travellers tell us, that one grain of Heshbon wheat exceeds in size two of the ordinary sort, that more than double the number of grains grow on the stalk; and the frequency, and in many cases nearness to each other of the ancient towns, "prove that the population of the country was formerly proportioned to its natural fer-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xiii. 10-19.<sup>2</sup> Isa. xvi. 8-10.

tility." No province in Europe is covered so thickly with towns as Moab is with ruins. Burckhardt enumerates about fifty sites of ruined cities within the boundaries of the land, many of them extensive; he speaks of "the many vestiges of field enclosures," and concurs with the testimony of Captains Irby and Mangles as to its former populousness; so does Seetzen. And Volney, who derived his information from some of the wandering Arabs, has marked the country of Moab in the map which is given with his travels, with the "ruins of towns."

A remarkable and unexpected confirmation of the Scripture statements as to the early power of Moab, is given by the inscription on the monument known as "the Moabite Stone." This sculptured monument, discovered in 1870, at Dhibān, the ancient Dibon, contains a record by Mesha, king of Moab in the ninth century before the Christian era, of his wars and victories over Israel. It was erected as a monument of triumph, before the final wars in which the land of Moab was subdued. It contains the names of several cities mentioned in the Bible, and gives testimony to the ancient populousness and power of the land.

The prophecies concerning Moab are numerous and very remarkable. There is scarcely any feature peculiar to its present state, which was not marked by the prophets in their description of the low condition to which, from the height of wickedness and haughtiness, it was finally to be brought down.

"Against Moab, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Wo unto Nebo! for it is spoiled; Kiriathaim is confounded and taken; Misgab is confounded and dismayed. There shall be no more praise of Moab. Moab is destroyed; the spoiler shall come upon every city, and

no city shall escape; the valley also shall perish and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate without any to dwell therein. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels. How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod! Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from thy glory and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, and shall destroy thy strongholds. And judgment is come upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, and upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdib-lathaim, and upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon, and upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab far or near.—O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.—Joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the wine-presses. None shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting.—I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure.—Wo be unto thee, O Moab."<sup>1</sup> "Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, even the breeding of nettles, and salt-pits, and a perpetual desolation."<sup>2</sup> "The cities of Aroer are forsaken, they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid."<sup>3</sup>

"The cities of Moab were to be desolate without any to dwell therein, no city was to escape. Moab was to flee away." And the cities of Moab have all disappeared.

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xlviii. 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18, 21-24, 28, 33, 38, 46.  
Zeph. ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. x. ii. 2.

The whole country abounds with their ruins. You have already had before you the testimony of Volney to this fact. And Burckhardt speaks of the state of some mentioned in Scripture: "The ruins of Eleale, Heshbon, Meon, Medaba, Dibon, Arcoer, still subsist to illustrate the history of the children of Israel." It may be added, with equal truth, that they still subsist to confirm the Divine authority of the Scriptures, and to prove that "holy men of God," who predicted the desolation of each of these very cities by name, "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The predicted judgment has fallen with such exactness upon these cities, and they are so utterly broken down, that even the prying curiosity of such indomitable travellers as Seetzen and Burckhardt, and Captains Irby and Mangles, could discover, among a multiplicity of ruins, only a few remains so entire as to be worthy of particular notice. The following description is drawn from their united testimony. Among the ruins of El Aal (Eleale) are a number of large cisterns, fragments of buildings, and foundations of houses. At Heshbon (Heshbon) are the ruins of a large ancient town, together with the remains of a temple, and some edifices; a few broken columns are still standing, and there are a number of deep wells cut in the rock. The ruins of Medaba are about two miles in circumference; there are remains of the walls of private houses, and the foundation of a temple, with two columns near it, but not a single edifice is standing. The chief object of interest is an immense cistern of hewn stones, which, as there is no stream at Medaba, might still be of use to the Arabs, were the surrounding ground cleared of the rubbish to allow the water to flow into it: "but such an undertaking is far beyond the views of the wandering

Arabs." The ruins of Diban (Dibon), situated in the midst of a fine plain, are of considerable extent, but present nothing of interest. The ruins of Myoun (the Bethmeon of Scripture) are marked by their hot-wells. Of this ancient city, as of Araayr (Aroer), nothing is remarkable, but what is common to them with all the cities of Moab, their entire desolation. The extent of the ruins of Rabba (Rabbath Moab), formerly the residence of the kings of Moab, sufficiently proves its ancient importance, though there is nothing to be particularly noted among them, except the remains of a palace or temple, the gate of another building, and an altar. There are many remains of private buildings, but none entire: but there are several cisterns. Mount Nebo was completely barren when Burckhardt passed over it, and the site of the ancient city has not been ascertained. "Nebo is spoiled." It is remarkable that these cities still retain their ancient names, and afford evidences of the truth of the prophecies delivered concerning each of them so exact that "he that runs may read."

But all the other cities of Moab are "desolate without any to dwell therein." None of them exist as tenanted by men. Kerak, which does not seem to be very ancient, nor to be referred to in Scripture, is the only nominal town in the whole country, and, in the words of Seetzen, who visited it, "in its present ruined state, it can only be called a hamlet," and "the houses have only one floor." In general the ancient towns are now but a "broken down" and undistinguishable mass of ruins; but some of them have remains of former greatness, such as immense stones, traces of hanging gardens, large columns, and cisterns cut out of the rock. When these cities were in their prime, and at ease, when arrogance,

haughtiness, and pride prevailed among them, the desolation and total abandonment of them all must have utterly surpassed human conception. That they should all, as it is said, "flee away," meet the same fate, and be all "desolate without any to dwell therein," must have appeared incredible, when foretold by the prophets, as it is a matter of admiration this day, that such is the case with them. That must be the word of God, and not of erring man, which can so well and so triumphantly abide that test of the truth of prophecy, its strict accomplishment: "They shall cry of Moab, how is it broken down!"

"The valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed." The country of Moab has often been a field of contest between the Arabs and the Turks, and both have contributed to reduce it to desolation. The different tribes of Arabs who possess it, are continually at war with each other; and the cultivation of the soil is either never thought of, or cannot be effected. Hence its extensive plains present a barren aspect, only relieved here and there by a few clusters of wild fig trees. And instead of that profusion which its plains must have exhibited in ancient times, nothing but patches of the best soil are now cultivated by the Arabs, and these only when they have the prospect of being able to secure the harvest against the incursions of enemies. Thus writes Burckhardt, who further informs us, that the many vestiges of field enclosures form no obstruction to the roaming of the Arabs' herds and flocks, which wander undisturbed over the country: and so, "while the valley is perished, and the plain destroyed, the cities also of Ammon are forsaken; they are for flocks which lie down, and none make them afraid."

The strong contrast between the ancient and actual state of Moab is shown in the condition of the inhabitants as well as of the land; and the prophecy and its fulfilment are equally striking in their agreement.

"The days come, saith the Lord, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels." The roving Arabs are now almost the only inhabitants of a country once studded with cities. Traversing the country, fixing their tents now in one place, now in another, depasturing and despoiling every part successively, "they are," indeed, "wanderers who have come up against it, and who keep it in a state of perpetual desolation." They lead a wandering life themselves; they know no regularity but a regular scheme of robbery, they prevent any from forming a fixed settlement who are disposed to attempt it; and literally, in the words of the prophecy, "cause them to wander." And they keep it in a state of perpetual desolation: for, "it may be remarked generally of them (says Burekhardt), that whenever they are the masters of the cultivators, the latter are soon reduced to beggary by their unceasing demands."

"O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth." Volney, in describing the inhabitants of that vast desert which occupies the place of those once flourishing countries, states, little designing, however, to throw such remarkable light upon this prophecy, that "the wretched peasants live in perpetual dread of losing the fruit of their labours, and no sooner have they gathered in their harvest, than they hasten to secrete it in private places, and retire among the rocks which border on the Dead Sea.' On the oppo-

site side of the country, near its borders, Seetzen relates that "there are many families living in caverns," and actually calls them "the inhabitants of the rocks." A few miles from the ruins of Heshbon, Captains Irby and Mangles tell us, "there are many artificial caves in a large range of perpendicular cliffs, in some of which are chambers and small sleeping apartments." Thus the rocks are tenanted, while the cities are desolate. But whether we consider that men are found dwelling in the latter, and "like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth," or that "flocks lie down in the former without any to make them afraid," the strict agreement of the facts with the predictions, mark these latter to be the word of that God, before whom the darkness of futurity is as light, and without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### PROPHECIES CONCERNING PHILISTIA

OF the Philistines we read much in the Old Testament. They were among the most powerful, active, and successful adversaries of the children of Israel. King David is particularly distinguished in Scripture for the success which God gave him against them. Their country, generally, was very fertile; they had many strong cities, and were a numerous, warlike, and powerful people. They were a very ancient nation, occupying their country in the time of Abraham.<sup>1</sup> They were governed by five princes called the Lords of the Philis-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxi



tines. Long after the time of Christ, and many hundred years after the prophets of God had foretold their desolation, the land of Philistia was populous and flourishing, its soil rich and well cultivated, its cities fortified, and nothing less likely than that ruin and desertion should come upon it. But God had ordained it to be so. And the voice of prophecy proclaimed the fate that awaited it, in terms as opposed at the time to every natural suggestion, as they are descriptive of the present state of this once famous land. "Behold, I will stretch out my hand upon the Philistines, and destroy the remnant of the sea-coast."<sup>1</sup> "The Lord will spoil the Philistines. Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley."<sup>2</sup> "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; but I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof: and I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptro from Ashkelon; and I will turn mine hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord God."<sup>3</sup> "Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon-day, and Ekron shall be rooted up.—O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea-coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks."<sup>4</sup> "The king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited—and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines."<sup>5</sup>

It is here declared, to give the general meaning of these passages, that the land of the Philistines was to be

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xlvii. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Amos i. 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> Zeph. ii. 4-6.

<sup>5</sup> Zech. ix. 5, 6.

destroyed. And it now partakes of the general desolation common to it with Judea and the neighbouring countries. But while ruins are to be found over them all, they are particularly abundant along the sea-coast, which formed, on the south, the realm of the Philistines.

"The sea-coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and felds for flocks. The remnant of the Philistines shall perish. Baldness is come upon Gaza; it shall be forsaken. The king shall perish from Gaza."

"In the plain between Ramla and Gaza" (tho very plain of the Philistines along the sea-coast) "we met," says Volney, "with a number of villages badly built of dried mud, and which, like the inhabitants, exhibit every mark of poverty and wretchedness. The houses, on a nearer view, are only so many huts, sometimes detached, at others ranged in the form of cells, around a court-yard, enelosed by a mud wall. In winter they and their cattle may be said to live together, the part of the dwelling allotted to themselves being only raised two feet above that in which they lodge their beasts. ('Dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.') All the rest of the country is a dosort, and abandoned to the Arabs, who feed their flocks on it." "The remnant shall perish, the land of the Philistines shall be destroyed."

"The ruins of white marble found at Gaza, prove that it was formerly the abode of luxury and opulence. It has shared in the general destruction, and notwithstanding its proud title of capital of Palestine, it is now no more than a defenceless village ('baldness has come upon it'), peopled by at most two thousand inhabitants." ("The king has perished from Gaza.") Its castle is nothing but a heap of rubbish. But this now poor and defenceless village was great enough to be made the residence of

a bishop three hundred years after Christ, and at least nine hundred after the prophets declared its future ruin! This Gaza, which once endured a siege of two months, it was so strongly fortified and well defended, is now open to any enemy; while the remains of its once beautiful buildings form enclosures for oxen and sheep. "A fire has been sent upon the wall of Geza, which has devoured the palaces thereof."

Of the truth of the prophecies concerning tenants: Ashkelon there cannot be a doubt: but a question may arise whether *baldness*, in the full meaning of the word, has come upon Gaza, the only remaining town in Philistia, or whether that city, however fallen from its former greatness, can strictly be said to be *forsaken* if peopled, like the modern town, by 2,000 inhabitants. But, as in some other instances, the author has been driven from a comparatively vague or undefined to a strictly *literal* interpretation.

Before approaching Gaza, unconscious where the ancient city stood, it might well be asked what is meant by baldness coming upon it. But having traversed the place on which it stood, and beholding it as it rises naked and bare above the plain, the writer could not fail to see that its perfect baldness shows how truly that word of the Lord rests upon it. On his first visit, he looked in vain for any fragment of ruin one cubit foot in size, for any shrub, or plant, or blade of grass, to relieve or interrupt the perfect *baldness* that has come on Gaza. He saw nothing but a jackal freely coursing over its bare surface. The sand of the desert is nowhere more smooth and bare; and the dark spots, where nothing but the vestiges of ruins lie, are so flat and level, that they form no exception to its *baldness*.

Additional evidence is given in the Narrative of Messrs. Bonar and M'Choyno.—“Returning to our tents, we were now prepared to verify Dr. Keith's conclusion, of the truth of which he had been fully satisfied—namely, that these hills of sand, where we had pitched our tents, really cover the ruins of ancient Gaza. Each of us had found minute fragments of polished marble in the flat hollows between the sand hills, the remains, no doubt, of ‘the palaces of Gaza.’ We now saw in a manner we had never done before, that God had literally fulfilled his own word, ‘Baldness is come upon Gaza,’—that literally and most remarkably the appearance of *baldness* has come upon Gaza. No spot of verdure, not a single blade of grass, did we see upon the sand hills. One solitary tree there was which only served to make the barrenness more remarkable. This barren, bare hill of sand, is the *bald head* of Gaza. How awfully true and faithful are the words of God!”<sup>1</sup>

“I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod.” Amongst the various successive ruins, those of Ezdoud (Ashdod), so powerful under the Philistines, are now remarkable for their scorpions. This city was also the see of a bishop; and in much earlier times withstood the longest siege recorded perhaps in history, one of twenty-nine years. But before “the word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword,” it has been cut off, and venomous reptiles are now its defence!

“Ashkelon shall be a desolation; it shall be cut off with the remnant of the valley; it shall not be inhabited.” The sea-coast, by which it was formerly washed, is every day removing further from the deserted ruins of Ashkelon. This city was formerly celebrated not less for the excel-

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of Mission to the Jews, 136-139.

lence of its wines, than for the strength of its fortifications. Twelve hundred years after Christ, it was a strong and celebrated place: the see of a bishop, and renowned in the wars between the Christians and Mohammedans. But now, instead of the hum of business or the clamour of war, silence reigns amid its ruins!

Let us now hear the relation of a Christian traveller who journeyed into this country some years back. He says: "Ashkelon was one of the proudest satrapies of the lords of the Philistines; now there is not an inhabitant within its walls; and the prophecy of Zechariah is fulfilled—'The king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.' When the prophecy was uttered, both cities were in equally flourishing condition; and nothing but the proscienco of Heaven could pronounce on which of the two, and in what manner, the vial of its wrath should be poured out. Gaza is truly without a king. The lofty towers of Ashkelon lie scattered on the ground, and the ruins within its walls do not shelter a human being. How is the wrath of man made to praise his Creator! Hath He said, and shall He not do it? The oracle was delivered by the mouth of the prophet more than five hundred years before the Christian era, and we behold its accomplishment eighteen hundred years after that event."<sup>1</sup>

With respect to Ekron, its very name is missing, nor is the spot certain on which it stood. "Ekron shall be rooted up." How remarkable are these facts! The fate of one city thus distinguished from another, the state and aspect of the country, the dwellings of its wretched inhabitants: these, testified both by believers and unbelievers in the Divine word, present such a striking

<sup>1</sup> Richardson's Travels.

proof of the truth of that word as nothing but the most wilful blindness, or careless indifference, can fail to notice.

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## CHAPTER IX.

## PROPHECIES CONCERNING EDMOM.

THE prophecies concerning Edom are so remarkable, that they shall be given somewhat at length. "From generation to generation it (Idumea) shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cornucopia and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr (or hairy creature) shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to gene-

ration shall they dwell therein.”<sup>1</sup> “Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him. If grape gatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleanings? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough. But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself. Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and art thou he that shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink of it. For I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah (the strong or fortified city) shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. Lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.”<sup>2</sup> “Thus saith the Lord God; I will stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman.”<sup>3</sup> “The word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxxiv. 5, 10-17.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xlix. 7-10, 12-18.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xxv. 13.

against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it, and say unto it, Thus saith the Lord God, I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate.—Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth. I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return. When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate. Thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the Lord.”<sup>1</sup> “Edom shall be a desolate wilderness.”<sup>2</sup> “I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee; thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high.—Shall I not destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?—The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau.”<sup>3</sup> “I laid the mountains of Esau and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness.”<sup>4</sup> Is there any land, once inhabited and opulent, so utterly desolate? There is; and that land is Idumea. And all may now know that He who spoke such judgments concerning it is the Lord.

Idumea was situated to the south and south-east of Judea. It bordered on the east with Arabia Petrea, under which name it was included in the latter part of

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxv. 1-3, 7, 9, 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Obad. ver. 2, 3, 8, 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Joel iii. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Mal. i. 3, 4.



its history; and it extended southward to the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. A single extract from the travels of Volney will be found to be equally illustrative of the prophecy and of the fact. "This country has not been visited by any traveller, but it well merits such an attention; for from the report of the Arabs of Bakir, and the inhabitants of Gaza, who frequently go to Maan and Karak, on the road of the pilgrims, there are to the south-east of the lake Asphaltites (Dead Sea), within three days' journey, upwards of thirty ruined towns, absolutely desorted. The Arabs, in general, avoid them, on account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm. We cannot be surprised at these traces of ancient population, when we recollect that this was the country of the Nabatheans, the most powerful of the Arabs, and of the Idumeans, who, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, were almost as numerous as the Jews. Besides the advantages of being under a tolerably good government, these districts enjoyed a considerable share of the commerce of Arabia and India, which increased their industry and population. We know that as far back as the time of Solomon, the cities of Astiourm Gaber (Esion Gaber) and Ailah (Eloth) were highly frequented marts. The Idumeans, from whom the Jews only took their ports at intervals, must have found in them a good source of wealth and population."<sup>1</sup> Evidence which must have been undesigned, which cannot be suspected of partiality, and which no illustration can strengthen, and no ingenuity pervert, is thus borne to the truth of the most wonderful prophecies. That the Idumeans were a populous and powerful nation at a time long after the delivery of the prophecies; that they pos-

<sup>1</sup> Volney's Travels, vol. ii. p. 344, etc.

sessed a tolerably good government (even in the estimation of Volney), that Idumea contained many cities; that these cities are now absolutely deserted; and that their ruins swarm with scorpions; that it was a commercial nation, and possessed highly frequented marts; that it forms a shorter route than an ordinary one to India; and yet that it had not been visited by any traveller, are facts stated or proved by Volney.

Although long a thoroughfare for the commerce of the surrounding nations, and possessed of highly frequented marts, it is with great difficulty that the traveller in these regions can penetrate on any side within the boundaries of Idumea. And during many ages, instead of being resorted to from every quarter, "none pass through it." But the time of the complete fulfilment of this prophecy, the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion, is yet to come. And the context obviously implies that it would not remain for ever unvisited and unknown, but that some would "seek out and find" that the predictions respecting it had been fulfilled.

The Arabs on its borders, and who migrate with their tents throughout Edom, and carry there their plunder from other regions, are a fierce and warlike race, notorious robbers, and at war even with the Arabs around them; and they threatened some travellers who reached their border with instant death if they attempted to pass through. And hence, while they used unconsciously the very words of one prophecy, their universal character, as well as their conduct, bears witness to another, "It shall be called the border of wickedness."

Burckhardt, a learned and very enterprising traveller, entered Edom, disguised as an Arab, and was stripped of some rags that covered his wounded ankles. Captains

Irby and Mangles, and two other English gentlemen, with several attendants, having obtained the protection of a most intrepid Arab chief, reached Petra, once the capital of Idumea, and after encountering the greatest difficulties and dangers, were soon forced to return. Many travellers have since visited Petra and its neighbourhood, and much interesting information has been derived respecting Edom.

The great difficulty of ascertaining the actual state of that country seems to be implied in the words of Scripture in reference especially to the animals that were to possess it: "Seek ye out and find, not one of those shall fail." And while all the facts have not heretofore been ascertained, neither is the time of the final judgments on the land yet fully come. Judea, Ammon, Moab, and Philistia, according to the sure word of prophecy, are to be brought back from desolation, and to be possessed by the people of Israel. But when the controversy of Zion shall be past, of Edom it is said by the Lord, "When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate."

Every new fact descriptive of the state of Edom, is an echo of the prophecies. Yet Burckhardt never once alluded to them; and as his sole object was to explore the country, they seem to have been wholly foreign to his view.

Of the eastern part of Edom he says, "All this country is a desert; and Maan" (or Toman, as marked in the map prefixed to his travels) "is the only inhabited place in it." "I will make it desolate from Teman." In the interior of Idumea, "the whole plain presented to the view an expanse of shifting sands. The depth of sand precludes all vegetation of herbage." "On ascending the western plain, we had before us an immense expanse

of dreary country, entirely covered with black flints, with here and there some hilly chain rising from the plain." "If grapo gatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleanings? but I have made Esau bare. I will make thee most desolate. I will stretch out upon Edom the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness."

"The traces of many towns and villages are to be seen in Edom. But the sand is in some places so very deep, that there is not the slightest appearance of a road or of any work of human art; though a Roman road passed directly through the country." Of the remains of ancient cities still exposed to view, Burckhardt describes the ruins of a large town, of which nothing remains but broken walls and heaps of stones; the ruins of several villages in its vicinity, the ruins of an ancient city; and the extensive ruins of Gherandel Arindela, an ancient town of Palestina Tertia. He enumerates nine different ruined places in Djebel Shera (Mount Seir), and states, that of the towns laid down in D'Anville's map, Thoana excepted, no traces remain. "I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir. I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return."

Yet the ruins of these cities are not the chief monuments of the ancient greatness of Edom. Its capital city, now without an inhabitant, except the wild animals to which it was allotted more than a thousand years before it ceased to be tenanted by men, presents one of the most wonderful and singular scenes that can possibly be conceived. In the vicinity of Mount Seir the extensive ruins of a large city—hoaps of hewn stones, foundations of buildings, fragments of columns, and vestiges of paved

streets, are spread over a valley which is enclosed on each side by perpendicular cliffs, varying from four hundred to seven hundred feet in height, which are hollowed out into innumerable chambers of different dimensions, rising in the cliffs, tier above tier, till "it seems impossible to approach the uppermost." Columns also rise above columns, and adorn the fronts of the dwellings; horizontal grooves, for the conveyance of water, run along the face of the cliffs; "flights of steps" formed the means of ascent, and the summit of the heights, in various places, is covered with pyramids cut out of the rock. The identity of the scene, as described by the prophet, in all the terribleness of the human power which then pertained to it, and as depicted in the desolate aspect it now exhibits, is such as cannot be mistaken. "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the cliffs of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill; though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord; also Edom shall be a desolation."

The monuments of its greatness are very numerous and magnificent. They are of various periods and orders of architecture. One of them, in particular, is described as a work of immense labour and colossal dimensions, in perfect preservation, containing a chamber sixteen paces square, and above twenty-five feet high, with a row of columns in front thirty-five feet high, crowned with a pediment highly ornamented, etc., "all cut out of the rock." And great, it is justly said, must have been the opulence of a city, which could dedicate such monuments to the memory of its rulers. But the time is come when "they shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom," (or

rather they shall call, or summon, the nobles thereof,) "but there shall be no kingdom there, and all her princes shall be nothing."

The city was the see of a bishop for several centuries; and there are many edifices of the Roman and Grecian architecture, which proves that they were built long after the Christian era. "They shall build, but I will throw down."

"Thorns shall come in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof." In Idumea each Bedouin, or wandering Arab, carries in his girdle a pair of small pincers, to extract the thorns from his feet. "I will make thee small among the nations; thou art greatly despised." So desolate a region as Edom is now become small among the nations. Instead of its ancient opulence and commerce, the picking of gum arabic from the thorny branches of the tahl trees is their poor occupation, and the only semblance of industry practised there by the Arabs. Instead of the superb structures of antiquity, they have only a few miserable huts; their tents are low and small; and some of them are destitute of any tents or shelter. The public authorities at Constantinople, not very long ago, when asked for a firman, or letter of protection to a traveller, to visit the ruins of Petra, denied all knowledge of such a place. How greatly is it despised!

"Shall I not destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?" Sir Isaac Newton traces the origin of letters, astronomy, and navigation, to the Edomites. The book of Job is as splendid and lasting a proof of the eloquence that pertained to Edom, as magnificent palaces, hewn out of the cliffs, are indestructible memorials of their power. But so

entirely has understanding departed out of the mount of Esau, that the wild wanderers who now traverse it consider the remains of antiquity as the work of genii! To clear away a little rubbish, merely to allow the water to flow into an ancient cistern, in order to render it useful to themselves, "is an undertaking far beyond the views of the wandering Arabs." They cherish sentiments the most superstitious and absurd; and no Temanite can now discourse like Eliphaz of old. "Wisdom is no more in Teman, and understanding has perished out of the mount of Esau."

The cormorant, according to our translation, is mentioned the first in order of the animals that were to be found in Edom; but the word in the original is *kath*; and there are instances in which it is written *kata*. Burckhardt, altogether unconscious of this, for he hazards a different supposition, relates that "the bird *katta* is met with in immense numbers. They fly in such large flocks, that the Arab boys often kill two or three of them at a time, merely by throwing a stick among them." They possess it.

"The owl and the raven (or crow) shall dwell in it." Owls have now "their lonely habitation" in the clefts of the rock where many of the children of Esau dwelt. "The fields of Tafyle," situated in the immediate vicinity of Edom, "are frequented by an immense number of crows."—Edom is famed among the Arabs for its ravens.

"It shall be a habitation for dragons" (serpents). The statement by Volney, derived by information from the Arabs, of the enormous scorpions with which the ruins of its cities swarm, and the similar testimony borne by a learned traveller, Dr. Shaw, who states that it

abounds with lizards and vipers, may suffice, in lieu of more direct proof, to show how the heritage of Esau is laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

"The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island." It is here worthy of remark, that the Emperor Decius caused fierce lions and lionesses to be transported from Africa to the borders of Palestine and Arabia, or Edom, that, propagating there, they might act as an annoyance to the barbarous Saracens. And thus transported from a distant desert, animals pertaining to different regions might literally be said to meet there.

"The satyr shall dwell there." The satyr is a fabulous animal. And the word (*soir*) should have been translated the goat, as different commentators have remarked that, without any reference to, or knowledge of the fact, as relating to Edom, where, as has only recently been ascertained, "herds of mountain goats pasture in flocks of forty or fifty together,"—they dwell there.

Lord Claud Hamilton, who, together with Lord Rokeby and Mr. Littleton, visited Petra in 1839, thus bears witness to the predicted desolation which has come on Edom and its capital. After quoting some of these prophecies, he adds, "Nothing can exceed the desolation of its present condition, although the signs of its former wealth and power are so durable as to have remained many centuries after it was deserted, and they look as if many more may pass over them without working any visible change. The commencement of the prophecy has been most wonderfully fulfilled, for although it was beyond the foresight of man to imagine that so wealthy and powerful a city should be deserted and desolate, yet all



human works and habitations are subject to a like fate, —but the words, 'I will make thee small among the heathen,' have been actually accomplished to such a degree, that the very site of Petra has for centuries been unknown. That a great city should be thus swept from the memory of man, and blotted out, for a long season, from the knowledge of the world, is a most striking manifestation of the truth of the prophetic record, and utterly exceeded all human foresight and sagacity. But every step in this country exhibits some wonderful fulfilment of the doom which was pronounced while it was flowing with riches, and teeming with inhabitants; every specific misfortune has overtaken this devoted kingdom, and yet there are innumerable remains of what it once was."

About the date of some of the buildings in Petra there is difference of opinion, but none as to the antiquity of the prophetic record. The writer has himself upon the spot<sup>1</sup> soon the literal fulfilment of the predictions.

"Thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and they shall know that I am the Lord." The dispersion of the Jews, and the desolation of Judea, do not more clearly accredit every word which the Lord has spoken against them, than each land of the ancient enemies of the Jews bears witness, in like manner, that the God of Israel he is the Lord. The Edomites have been cut off for ever, and there is none remaining of the house of Esau. And Edom, notwithstanding the terribleness of its strength of old, and the magnificence of its desolated and deserted habitations, now lies stricken with a judgment that shall never be re-

<sup>1</sup> Daguerreotype views of the ruins of Petra were taken by George S. Keith, M.D., son of the author, during his second visit to the East.

pealed. The word of the Lord against it has not returned unto him void; it never goes causelessly forth; and it ever unerringly fulfils the purpose for which He sent it.

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## CHAPTER X.

### PROPHECIES CONCERNING NINEVEH.

TO a brief record of the creation, of the antediluvian world, and of the dispersion and different settlements of mankind after the deluge, the Scriptures of the Old Testament add a history of the Hebrews for the space of fifteen hundred years, from the days of Abraham to the era of the last of the prophets. While the historical part of Scripture thus traces, from its origin, the history of the world, the prophecies give a prospective view, which reaches to its end. And it is remarkable that profane history, ceasing to be fabulous, becomes clear and authentic about the very period when sacred history terminates, and when the fulfilment of those prophecies commences which refer to other nations besides the Jews.

Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, was, for many ages, a very extensive and populous city. Its walls are described by heathen historians as having been a hundred feet in height, sixty miles in compass, with fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high. This "exceedingly great city" having repented at the preaching of Jonah, its destruction was averted for a time; but relapsing into iniquity, it was swept away, so that there are now but slight vestiges of it to be seen. The Assyrians grievously oppressed the Israelites, took

Samaria, and carried the ten tribes into captivity.<sup>1</sup> They took also all the fenced cities of Judah, and exacted a heavy tribute from the Jews. But the glory and the power of Assyria, and of its capital city, are departed; like that of the mighty host of Sennachorib, its king, when smitten, in a night, by an angel of the Lord.

A Greek historian, who repeatedly alludes to an ancient prophecy concerning it as known to the Ninevites, in describing the manner of its destruction, relates, that the Assyrian army was suddenly assaulted by the Medes in a time of festivity, when they had been supplied with much wine; and that, unable to resist the enemy, a great part of them were destroyed; that the river having increased to an excessive and unexampled height, by heavy and long-continued rains, broke down a great extent of the wall, opened an entrance for the enemy, and overflowed the lower part of the city; that the king in his desperation, and deeming the prediction accomplished, heaped an immense funeral pile, and having set fire to it, and to the palace, was himself consumed, together with his household and his wealth; and, finally, that the Medes having taken the city, after a siege of three years, carried away many talents of silver and gold to Ecbatana: "While they are drunken as drunkards they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.—With an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof.—The gates of the rivers shall be opened.—Nineveh is of old like a pool of water.—The gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars.—Fortify thy strongholds—there shall the fire devour thee. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6; xviii. 10-13, 34; Ezra iv. 2.

there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture."<sup>1</sup>

"The name of Nineveh," says Volney, "seems to be threatened with the same oblivion which has overtaken its greatness." "The Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown. I will make thy grave, for thou art vile."<sup>2</sup> The great Nineveh is no more. No more of its name is sown; the town near to its site is called by another name. But its name is written in the Word of God, and shall not pass into oblivion, till tongues shall cease and prophecy fail.

The Lord did *make the grave* of Nineveh. And, disclosing at last its ancient glory, else but obscurely known, it has of late been partly disinterred. There is now another proof than that of the largeness of a heap, where the palace stood. And the written record of the manner of its destruction is accredited as if by a voice from its grave. The government of France has become the purveyor of evidence: and Paris might learn a lesson from the shipload of the relics of Nineveh. More may hence be learned than the knowledge of Assyrian arts.

Nineveh, the city of fifteen hundred towers, whose walls were a hundred feet in height, and had space on their summits for three chariots abreast, seemed more utterly ruined than even Babylon; yet from beneath its dust has the long buried arts of the Assyrian been recovered. Fifteen halls of this vast palace, with their corresponding esplanades, have been cleared. The rest of the monument, it is made quite certain, has been destroyed,—intentionally however, the stones having been carried off to serve for other buildings. A fortunate

<sup>1</sup> Nahum i. 8, 10; ii. 6, 8, 9; iii. 13-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 8, 14.

accident—that would seem an evil one at the time—has preserved for us what remains. This portion of the palace has been ravaged by fire, which has entirely destroyed only the timbers of the roofs: but as the other calcined materials were rendered useless for new constructions, they have been left where they were; and thus one-third of the edifice remains to testify of the rest. “Fifteen chambers, some above a hundred feet in length, and evidently forming part of a magnificent palace, have been opened. Their walls are entirely covered with inscriptions and sculptures, specimens of which may be seen in the British Museum.”

The buried arts of the Assyrian have been recovered from beneath the dust of Nineveh. And still figured on the calcined walls of the disinterred palace, are vases, drinking-cups, decorated scabbards and shields, chairs, tables, and other articles of domestic use, ornaments of the head, and bracerlots and ear-rings, all designed with the most consummate taste, so as to rival the productions of the most cultivated period of Greek art—and also figures of the very things of which the prophet spake, in issuing his mandate to the enemies of Nineveh, to be obeyed ere that city should be turned into its grave. *Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture.*

All controversy or question is now at an end respecting the mounds or ruinous heaps near to Mosul, as those of Nineveh of old. “Bricks from Kouyunjik are inscribed with the name of Nineveh.” Of “the discoveries in the ruined palace of Sennacherib” at the time of his departure for Europe, Mr. Layard says, “In this magnificent edifice I had opened no less than seventy-one halls, chambers, and passages, whose walls, almost

without an exception, had been panelled with slabs of sculptured alabaster, recording the wars, the triumphs, and the great deeds of the Assyrian king. By a rough calculation, about 9,880 feet, or nearly two miles, of bas-reliefs, with twenty-seven portals, formed by colossal winged bulls and lion-sphinxes, were uncovered in that part alone of the building explored during my researches. Only a part of the palace has been excavated, and much still remains under ground of this enormous structure. Since my return to Europe, other rooms and sculptures have been discovered.

"There are ravines on all sides of the Kouyunjik, except that facing the Tigris. If not entirely worn by the winter rains, they have, undoubtedly, been deepened and increased by them. They are strewn with fragments of pottery, bricks, and sometimes stones and burnt alabaster, whilst the falling earth frequently discloses in their sides vast masses of solid brick masonry, which fell in when undermined by the rains." "The sculptures of Kouyunjik had been exposed to the fire which had destroyed the palace."

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## CHAPTER XI.

### PROPHECIES CONCERNING BABYLON AND CHALDEA.

**B**ABYLON rivalled Nineveh in its greatness and wickedness. And now the ruins of these once hostile cities—which vied with each other, and both of which oppressed and led captive, the one the Israelites, the other the Jews—show that each of them has borne its predicted "burden," and that the vision which the

prophets of Israel saw respecting them is true. When Babylon was in the plenitude of its power, 160 years before the foot of an enemy had entered it, the voice of prophecy pronounced its doom. The accounts are now as ample, and the witnesses as numerous, of its present desolation, as of its ancient greatness.

Herodotus, Xenophon, Strabo, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, and Quintus Curtius, who are all celebrated Greek or Roman writers, describe the ancient greatness of Babylon. Their descriptions of it vary considerably, as referring to its state at different periods. But all concur in relating its wonderful magnificence, which is manifest to this day in the immense masses of its ruins. The testimony of Herodotus, the earliest of these writers, who lived about 250 years after Isaiah, is particularly valuable, as he visited Babylon, and wrote from what he saw and examined on the spot. The walls of Babylon, before their height was reduced to seventy-five feet by Darius Hystaspes, were above three hundred feet high; they were eighty-seven feet broad, and forty-eight miles in compass. The temple of Belus, six hundred feet in height, the artificial hanging gardens, which, piled in successive terraces, towered as high as the walls, the embankments which restrained the Euphrates, the hundred brazen gates, the palace built by Nebuchadnezzar, surrounded by three walls eight miles in compass, and the adjoining artificial lake, the circumference of which was far more than a hundred miles, and its depth, by the lowest account, thirty-five feet, all displayed many of the mightiest works of mortals concentrated in a single spot. The great Babylon was the glory of kingdoms, and the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, the golden city, the lady of kingdoms, and the praise of the whole earth.

The Scriptures, which thus describe it, mark minutely every stage of its fall, till it should become what now it is—a complete desolation. And every feature of its present aspect is delineated in the prophecies, with all the precision with which they could now be drawn by the traveller who looks on fallen Babylon itself.

Concerning the siege of Babylon, Herodotus and Xenophon relate, in exact accordance with what Isaiah and Jeremiah<sup>1</sup> had foretold, that the Medes and Persians, united under Cyrus (who was prophesied of by Isaiah, above a hundred years before he was born, as raised up by God to subdue nations before him, and to be his instrument in punishing his enemies, and delivering his own people),<sup>2</sup> came up upon Babylon and besieged it;—that the Babylonians, enclosed within their impregnable walls, could not by any means be provoked to a combat in open field, but remained in their holds and forbore to fight; that the device was adopted by Cyrus of turning the waters of the Euphrates, which flowed through the city, into the lake, whereby a snare was laid for Babylon;—that the waters of the river being thus dried up, so as to allow men to go over dry-shod, the enemy entered by its channel;—that, from the negligence of the guards, the gates, leading from the river to the city, were not shut;—that the Median and Persian army thus entering into the midst of the city by stratagem, and as if by stealth, designedly during the night of an annual Babylonish festival, Babylon was taken when it was not aware;—that its princes, captains, and mighty men, when reposing after their feasts, and after they were

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xlii. ; xlv. 24-25 ; xlv. 1-4 ; Jer. i. and li. Isaiah prophesied 160 years before the taking of Babylon, 250 years before Herodotus, and nearly 350 before Xenophon.



drunken, were suddenly slaughtered, and slept the sleep of death;—and that Babylon, which had never been conquered before, was thus taken without resistance, in a moment, and in a manner which, till accomplished, was unknown to the king and to the inhabitants, who were not aware of their danger (the city being so very extensive), till one post ran to meet another, with the tidings that the onomy were within it, and that Babylon was taken.<sup>1</sup>

The gradual decline of Babylon throughout succeeding ages is also traced in the prophecies. "Sit in the dust; there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans."<sup>2</sup> Babylon ceased to be the seat of government, and was reduced from an imperial to a tributary city. "All the graven images of her gods shall be broken unto the ground.—I will punish Bel (the temple of Belus) in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up."<sup>3</sup> Xerxes (a successor of Cyrus on the throne of Persia) seized the sacred treasures, and plundered or destroyed the temples and idols of Babylon.—"Take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed."<sup>4</sup>

Alexander the Great attempted to restore Babylon to its former glory, and designed to make it the metropolis of a universal empire. Ten thousand men were employed in repairing the embankments of the Euphrates and the temple of Belus. But the death of Alexander, when in the prime of life, put an end to the work:—"she was not healed." "They shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast."<sup>5</sup> About a hundred and thirty

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxi. 2; xiv. 1; xlv. 27; Jer. i. 38; li. 11, 27, 30, 31, 36, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xlvii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. li. 44, 47, 52.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. li. 8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. i. 3

years before the Christian era, a Parthian conqueror destroyed the fairest parts of Babylon; and many of the inhabitants, together with their effects, were removed into Media. The neighbouring city of Seleucia also drained it of a great part of its population.

Many nations and great kings, according to the prophecy, have served themselves of the land of the Chaldeans.<sup>1</sup> The Persians, the Greeks, the Parthians, the Romans, the Saracens, and the Turks, are the chief of the many nations who have unscrupulously and unsparingly served themselves of the land of the Chaldeans. And Cyrus and Darius, kings of Persia; Alexander the Great; Seleucus, king of Assyria; Demetrius, and Antiochus the Great; Trajan, Severus, Julian, and Heraclius, emperors of Rome; the victorious Omar, the successor of Mohammed; Holagon and Tamerlane, were "great kings," who successively subdued or desolated Chaldea, or exacted from it tribute to such an extent as scarcely any other country ever paid to a single conqueror.

As history attests, and as prophecy declared, they were cruel both in anger and fierce wrath to lay the land desolate. Chaldea, the land of Babylon, the most fertile land in the East, has been a spoil; the whole land has been destroyed. The sound of battle and of great destruction has been heard in the land; a fire has been kindled in her cities, which has devoured all round about. Age after age, all that spoil her have been satisfied. The sower and reaper have been cut off. Fanners have fanned Babylon, and emptied her hand. And the glory of kingdoms has become the hindmost of the nations. The whole land is desolate; all the cities are destroyed.

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxv. 14.

and greatly as it excelled in vain glory and strove against the Lord, great has been the destruction which has come upon Babylon from the Almighty.

After the commencement of the Christian era, Babylon was only partially inhabited; and a wide space within the walls was cultivated. It diminished as Seleucia increased; and the latter which was very populous, became the greater city. Pliny says it had in his time 600,000 inhabitants. Babylon became gradually more and more desolate, till, in the fourth century, its walls formed an inclosure for wild beasts; and the place where the golden city had stood, which reigned over the nations, was converted into a field for the chase—a hunting place for the pastime of the Persian monarchs. The name of Babylon was cut off from the history of the world, and a long interval succeeded without any record concerning it. And the progress of ages has brought it at last to that utter desolation which the prophets testified that it would finally become.

The ruins of Babylon, the site or situation of which has been completely ascertained, have been visited and described, of late, by Mr. Rich, formerly British resident at Bagdad; Mr. Kinnier, author of the "Memoir of Persia;" Sir Robert Ker Porter, Captain Frederick, Mr. Buckingham, Major Keppel, and other more recent travellers. There is some diversity of opinion among those witnesses as to what particular palace or edifice of ancient Babylon is to be considered as now represented by a particular mound or heap; but the greatness of the desolation is visible to all, and admits neither of denial nor dispute. For, from being the "glory of kingdoms," Babylon is now the greatest of ruins; and after the lapse of two thousand four hundred years, it exhibits to the

view of every traveller the precise scene defined in prophecy; and it could not now be described in more appropriate and graphic terms than the following, though such words had never been known to be its "burden."

The name and remnant are cut off from Babylon. It is wholly desolate. It has become hoaps. It is cut down to the ground, brought down to the grave, trodden on, uninhabited, its foundations are fallen, its walls thrown down and utterly broken, its loftiest edifices have been rolled down from the rocks; the golden city has ceased, the worms are spread under it, and the worms cover it. There the Arabian pitches not his tent; there the shepherds make not their folds; but wild beasts of the desert lie there, and their houses are full of doleful creatures, &c. It is a possession for the bittern, and a dwelling-place for dragons—a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert—a burnt mountain—empty—wholly desolate—pools of water—heaps—and utterly destroyed—a land where no man dwelloth—every one that goeth by it is astonished, &c.<sup>1</sup>

The superstitious dread of evil spirits, and the natural terror at the wild beasts which dwell among the ruins of Babylon, restrain the Arab from pitching his tent, or shepherds from making their folds there. The princely palaces and habitations of Babylon, utterly destroyed, are now nothing but unshapely heaps of bricks and rubbish; along the sides, or on the summits of which, instead of the stately chambers which once they formed, are now caverns, where porcupines creep, and owls and bats nestle; where "lions" find a den, and "jackals, hyenas, and other noxious animals, an unmolested retreat;" from which "issues a loathsome smell;" and

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xiii. 19-22; xiv. 22, 23; Jer. i. 13, 23, 39; li. 13, 26, etc.

the entrances to which "are strewed with the bones of sheep and goats." Though utterly destroyed, "their houses are full of doleful creatures, and owls dwell there, and satyrs dance there. The wild beasts lie there and cry in their desolate houses; it shall be no more inhabited for ever," &c. On the one side of the Euphrates, the canals being dry, and the crumbled bricks on an elevated surface exposed to the scorching sun, these "sun-burnt ruins" cover an "arid plain," and Babylon is a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. On the other, the embankments of the river, and with them the vestiges of ruins over a large space, have been swept away; the plain is in general "marshy, and in many places inaccessible," especially after the annual overflowing of the Euphrates: "no son of man doth pass thereby; the sea, or river, is come upon Babylon, she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof." "At that season also large deposits of the waters," as Sir Robert Ker Porter, in his vivid description of the ruins of Babylon, remarks, "are left stagnant between the ruins; again verifying the threat denounced against it—I will make thee a possession for the bittern, and pools of water." The same author states, that "the abundance of the country is gone as clean away as if the besom of destruction had swept it from north to south."<sup>1</sup> And the "View of Babylon," inserted in his travels, is truly a picture of utter desolation, presenting its heaps to the eye, and showing how, as if literally buried under them—"Babylon is brought down to the grave."

Fallen Babylon bears another mark of judgment, which has not been effected by the overflows of the Euphrates, by the ravages of wild beasts, by the devastations

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xiv. 23.

of time, nor by the rapacity of man. There are, on the ruins of Birs Nimrod, or temple of Belus, which was standing after the beginning of the Christian era, large fragments of brick-work that have been "completely molten," and that ring like glass; which must not only have been subjected to a heat "equal to that of the strongest furnace," but which, being vitrified all around, "bear evident proof," as Mr. Buckingham remarks, "of the operation of fire having been continued on them, as well after they were broken down as before;" and bear as evident proof that the ruin resembles, to use, in justice, the words of Major Keppel, "what the Scriptures prophesied it should become, a burnt mountain." It is still worthy, from its mere immensity, of being a relic of Babylon the great, for, though a mass of ruins, it is still two hundred and thirty-five feet high. "From the summit we had a distinct view," says Major Keppel, "of the heaps which constitute all that now remains of ancient Babylon; a more complete picture of desolation could not well be imagined. The eye wandered over a barren desert, in which the ruins were nearly the only indication that it had ever been inhabited. It was impossible to behold this scene, and not to be reminded how exactly the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled, even in the appearance Babylon was doomed to present; that she should never be inhabited; that the Arabian should not pitch his tent there; that she should be a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness."

"The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken." They were so broad, that, as ancient historians relate, six chariots could be driven on them abreast. They existed for more than a thousand years after the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Jer. li. 25.

phesy was delivered. They were numbered among "the seven wonders of the world." And what can be more wonderful now, or what could have been more inconceivable by man, when Babylon was in its strength and glory, than that the broad walls of Babylon should be so utterly broken that it can scarcely be determined with certainty that even a vestige of them remains? The trench out of which they were formed must now, in a great measure, be filled with them again; for both have alike disappeared. Captain Frederick could discover no appearance of the wall, after an active search of six days. One of the chapters, sixty pages in length, of Mr. Buckingham's travels, is entitled, "A Search after the Walls of Babylon." Major Keppel, after stating that he and those who accompanied him having, in common with other travellers, totally failed in discovering any trace of the city walls, adds that "the Divine predictions against Babylon have been so literally fulfilled in the appearance of the ruins, that I am disposed to give the fullest signification to the words of Jeremiah—'The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken.'"<sup>1</sup>

"Who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God beside me." Has not the day of the Lord come against Babylon as a destruction from the Almighty? And when we see the proudest works of man thus brought to the dust, where is the human strength, or wisdom, or beauty, or greatness, in which any ought to glory, and whose name alone is it that ought ever to be feared, and that shall be exalted for ever, but that of the Lord who hath performed his every purpose against Babylon? And, seeing that the glory of kingdoms is thus fallen,

<sup>1</sup> Jer. li. 53

what earthly possession or privilege deserves to be prized like the citizenship of that kingdom which alone can never be moved? and how worthless in comparison shall they all at last prove, even as the dust of fallen Babylon! And what other stay need the true Christian seek, or what human fear need he dread, while he puts his trust in that God according to whose word the broad walls of Babylon have been utterly broken? And if the life on their lips, and the breath in their nostrils, and the graves of their brethren and forefathers, cannot teach worldly, careless, and nominal Christians, that pride was not made for man, let them go and look for the walls of Babylon, and stand on the blasted ruins of the temple of Belus. There they may learn, visibly illustrated, the truth of that word of God—"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Oh that all such would remember, "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever!"

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## CHAPTER XII.

### PROPHECIES CONCERNING TYRE.

TYRE, situated at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean Sea, and to the north of Palestine, was for a long period the greatest commercial city in the world. Carthage, the rival of Rome, was one of the many colonies of Tyre. Its opulence and extensive commerce are described by various heathen authors, and are eloquently delineated in the 26th, 27th, and 28th chapters of Ezekiel;



in which the various characteristics of its then existing greatness are contrasted with the varied changes and humiliations it would undergo, till it should become a "place whereon fishers should dry their nets." We may here again refer to the testimony of Volney, who not only describes Tyre as having been "the thoatro of an immense commerce and navigation—the nursery of arts and science, and the city of perhaps the most industrious and active people over known," but who also quotes, "as a valuable fragment of antiquity," Ezekiel's splendid description of its greatness, and clear announcement of its future desolation, and expressly acknowledges that "the vicissitudes of time, or rather the barbarism of the Groeks of the lower empiro, and the Mohan-medans have accomplished this prediction."<sup>1</sup> The barbarism of the Mohammedans, which finally completed the desolation of Tyre and the accomplishment of the prophecy, did not commence till twelve centuries after the "fragment of antiquity" which recorded its destiny was written. But no length nor "vicissitudes of time" can conceal any event from the all-seeing eye of God.

The destruction of old Tyre (which was situated on the continent of Phœnicia), by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon;—the dispersion of the inhabitants, and their flight by sea into other regions;—the subsequent restoration (after the downfall of the Babylonian monarchy) of its commerce and wealth in that part of the city, or New Tyre, which was built on an island half a mile from the shore; the siege and destruction of this latter by Alexander the Great; the laying of the stones, and timber, and dust (the ruins of the old or continental city), into the midst of the water; yea, the scraping of her dust

<sup>1</sup> Volney's Travels, vol. ii. pp. 210-212.

from off her, which were done by that conqueror (as the historians of his life relate), in forming a mound from the shore to the island in carrying on the siege of the new city; the smiting of the power of this latter in the sea by her capture, and the annihilation of her commerce; the burning of the city; the slaughter of many of her inhabitants; and the selling of others into captivity, form the most prominent historical facts relative to Tyre; and are each the fulfilment of a prophecy. The destruction of the first city by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans took place in the year 573 before Christ; the insular city began to flourish seventy years after, and its siege and capture took place 330 years before the birth of our Saviour. The prophecies which predicted these two separate destructions of Tyre appertain to both, some expressions being applicable to the former, and some only to the latter; but all have been strikingly accomplished.

It is of old Tyre that the prophet wrote: "They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. I will also scrape her dust from her. I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more. Though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found."<sup>1</sup>

Where *ancient* Tyre flourished in its greatness and pride, not a city, nor town, nor village now stands; and not a house is to be seen over the wide extended space, but a few hovels near a copious fountain, that springs forth as pure and full as ever. Tyre, on the continent, as it existed in the days of the prophets, in all its magnificence and wealth, has wholly vanished, and scarcely a vestige of it remains, but a fragment of a ruined aqueduct. *It is no more.* It may be sought for, but *it cannot*

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxvi. 4, 12, 21.

*be found.* The stones and the timber that formed it, and even its very dust, lie, where the first great king of Grecia cast it, *in the midst of the waters.* It is trodden under foot by every one who now passes over the bare and unobstructed path to the ancient island to which it still unites the shore, now forming a peninsula. The neck of land thus constructed in verification of the prophetic word is also, according to it, bare like the *top of a rock*, and forms on both sides a beach ever washed by the sea. The fishers of the modern village on the ancient island literally spread their nets on the sand which covers the surface of the mound, which forms on either side *a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea.*

It matters not by what means these "prophecies have been verified;" for the means were as inscrutable and as impossible to have been foreseen by man, as the event. The fact is beyond a doubt that they have been literally fulfilled, and therefore the PROPHECIES ARE TRUE. They may be overlooked, but no ingenuity can pervert them. No facts could have been more unlikely or striking, and no predictions respecting them could have been more clear.

"No traveller," says Van de Velde, "can visit this city without being completely convinced that not one single word which the Lord hath said concerning (*against*) Tyre has fallen to the ground."<sup>1</sup> "Even in the more modern Tyre of the middle ages, what has become of her double and triple walls, her lofty towers, her large and massive mansions? Not only have these structures been overthrown, but their very materials have in a great measure disappeared. Tyre has been used as a quarry for the repair of the fortifications of Akka (Acre), and the

<sup>1</sup> Van de Velde, p. 191.

construction of the modern houses of Beyrout; her stately columns, whose size and material place them beyond the reach of modern architects, have been left where they were cast, 'in the midst of the water.' The sites once occupied by her palaces have been made bare 'as the top of a rock;' the fishermen 'spread their nets' upon the prostrate ruins of her ramparts, her harbours are filled up by drifting sand, her commerce and her wealth have long deserted her; 'what city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?'<sup>1</sup>

Such, however, was the celebrity of Tyre, and its adaptation for commerce, that it was soon rebuilt on the island, and long continued to flourish. An elegant temple and many churches were built there after the Christian era. Her merchandize and her hire, according to the prophecy, were holiness to the Lord. But the Christian churches in the East degenerated like those in the West—idolatry prevailed, transgressions came to the full. The Saracens, and afterwards the Turks (the first and the second "woe"), overspread many a fertile region; and Tyre, though it continued a commercial city of importance till within the period of the last six hundred years, had become in the last century what from the beginning prophecy had declared it eventually would be—like the top of a rock—"a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea."<sup>2</sup> "The whole village of Tyre," says Volnoy, "contains only fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little ground, and a trifling fishery." "The port of Tyre," as seen and described by Dr. Shaw, "small as it is, is choked up to that degree with sand and rubbish, that the boats of those

<sup>1</sup> Handbook for Syria and Palestine, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 5.

fishermen who now and then visit this once renowned emporium, and dry their nets upon its rocks and ruins, can with great difficulty only be admitted." Bruce describes the site of Tyre as a "rock whereon fishers dry their nets." The "mart of nations" is a fishing village; the walls of Tyrus and her towers are broken down; and fishermen spread their nets where "the princes of the sea" dwelt in their pleasant houses, and in the place from whence "the kings of the earth were enriched with the multitude of its riches and merchandize."

Tyrus sends not forth any merchandize to the nations now; but it sends forth a voice that may well reach further than all its traffic ever did, and be more profitable, as it has been more enduring, than all its fine linen, embroidered work, benches of ivory, precious clothes, ebony, emeralds, purple, agate, spices, fruits, wines, and all the multitude of its wares.<sup>1</sup> And while all the ends of the earth may give audience unto that voice which cometh from the Lord, it may especially be heard by those who have succeeded to the commerce of the Tyrians, lest, being lifted up and corrupted as these people, their punishment should be the same. And now, when the noise of their songs has ceased, and the sound of their harps is no more heard; and when the princes of the sea have come down from their thrones; their predicted fate, which has been fulfilled, imparts to all who would err like them, a solemn warning to cultivate another and a better wisdom (such as once was taught by the fishermen of Galilee) than that "great wisdom and traffic" by which they increased their riches, and their heart was lifted up, but which could not save them from "the day of their ruin."

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxvii.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## PROPHECIES CONCERNING EGYPT.

EGYPT was one of the most ancient, and one of the mightiest of kingdoms. The imperishable pyramids, and the ruins of its cities and temples, together with the splendid "tombs of the kings," several of which have of late been opened by Belzoni, are now the chief, and nearly the only indications of its ancient glory. The abundance and magnificence of these surpass description, as the number of its cities and towns in ancient times, stated by Herodotus at twenty thousand, exceeds belief. That eminent author, who is styled the father of history, describes Egypt as being, both by nature and art, the most fruitful of all lands, and as containing more wonders than all other regions. Egypt is still full of wonders, though its ancient cities and temples are now in ruins. Those have been largely described by Norden, Denon, Hamilton, Burckhardt, Belzoni, and others. Those stupendous temples, abounding with massy and lofty columns, are profusely covered with hieroglyphics, and, though they were erected by mortals who had changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, seem destined to pay homage to the one living and true God,—the God of Israel,—by illustrating the historical as well as prophetic truth of his word.

Egypt was the theme of many prophecies which were fulfilled in ancient times, as Bishop Newton has shown in his Dissertations on the Prophecies; and it bears to this

day, as it has borne throughout many ages, the marks with which prophecy had stamped its destiny.<sup>1</sup>

Egypt could truly boast of a long race of kings; and had continued, without interruption, a mighty kingdom from the earliest ages of the world. Its history, in this as in other respects, has, since the era of the prophets, been wholly reversed. But, however contrary to all human probability, and to all former experience, they plainly foretold that reversal.

Invaded and subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, according to the word of the Lord, both by Jeremiah,<sup>2</sup> and by Ezekiel,<sup>3</sup> subjected afterwards by the Persians under Cambyases, and to the Macedonians by Alexander the Great,<sup>4</sup> Egypt was, after his death, governed for nearly three centuries by the Ptolemies, the descendants of one of his generals, at which time it was an opulent kingdom, till about thirty years before the Christian era it came under the Roman yoke; and Saracens, Mamelukes, and Turks have since successively ruled over it. Its history shows the completion of the prophecies concerning it.

God had declared by Ezekiel,<sup>5</sup> "They shall be a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more among the nations. The pride of her power shall come down. I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers; I the Lord have spoken it. There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt. The sceptre of Egypt shall depart away."

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxix. 14, 15; xxx. 7, 12, 13; xxxii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xli. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xxx. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. xix. 1-19.

<sup>5</sup> Ezek. xxix. 14, 15; xxx. 6, 12, 13.

"Such," says Volney, "is the state of Egypt. Deprived twenty-three centuries ago of her natural proprietors, she has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and, at length, the race of Tartars distinguished by the name of Ottoman Turks. The Mamelukes purchased as slaves, and introduced as soldiers, soon usurped the power, and elected a leader. If their first establishment was a singular event, their continuance is not less extraordinary. They are replaced by slaves brought from their original country. The system of oppression is methodical. Everything the traveller sees or hears reminds him he is in the country of slavery and tyranny. In Egypt there is no middle class, neither nobility, clergy, merchants, nor landowners. Ignorance, diffused through every class, extends its effects to every species of moral and physical knowledge," etc.<sup>1</sup> "A more unjust and absurd constitution," says Gibben, "cannot be devised than that which condemns the natives of a country to perpetual servitude under the arbitrary dominion of strangers and slaves. Yet such has been the state of Egypt above 500 years. The most illustrious sultans of Baharite and Berghite dynasties were themselves promoted from the Tartar and Circassian bands; and the four-and-twenty beys, or military chiefs, have ever been succeeded, not by their sons, but by their servants."<sup>2</sup> This singular power (the Mamelukes) was by Mehemet Ali destroyed in a most treacherous and sanguinary manner. Under its new rulers Egypt has still continued to be wasted and impoverished. It is a base kingdom, however there may be increase of power

<sup>1</sup> Volney's Travels, vol. i. pp. 74, 103, 110, 190, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. of Decl. of Rom. Empire, ch. lix.



and wealth to its ruler. The people, the poor Fallahin, are ground down by exactions and by forced labour. The present ruler is "an oppressor and a stranger;" and the price paid for his authority and power, and the whole property of the country being at the will of every succeeding pasha, show literal fulfilment of ancient prediction.

On a review of the prophecies relative to Nineveh, Babylon, Tyro, Egypt, Judea, and all the adjoining territories, is it not a certain fact, which can admit of no dispute, and which needs no argument to support it, but which rests on the testimony of unbelievers no less than of Christians, that the fate of all these cities and countries, in reference to their past history and present state, demonstrates the truth of the prophecies concerning them, and that all these prophecies, ratified by the events, give the most decisive proof that these holy men of old, who all testified of Jesus, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? No word can be more sure, in regard to past and present things, than theirs was in regard to the future. The desolations were the work of man, and were all effected by the enemies of Christianity. And it is the prediction of these literal facts, in all their particulars and minuteness, infinitely surpassing human foresight, which is the word of God alone. The ruin of empires, while it proves the truth of every tittle of these predictions, is thus a miraculous confirmation and proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. By what fatality is it, then, and how much does it show the weakness of their cause, that infidels should have chosen for the display of their power this very field, where, without conjuring, as they have done, a lying spirit from the ruins, they might have read the fulfilment of the prophecies on every spot? Every

fact related by Volney and other infidel writers, is a witness against their speculations—and out of their own mouths are they condemned. Can any purposed deception be greater or more glaring than to overlook these prophecies, and to attempt to raise an argument against the truth of Christianity from those very facts which, attesting their fulfilment, thereby so clearly establish it? Or, can any evidence of Divine inspiration be more convincing and clear than to view, in conjunction, all these marvellous predictions and their perfect completion?

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE ARABS.

OF Ishmael, from whom the ARABS claim their descent, it was said by the angel of the Lord before his birth, "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. I will make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly; and I will make him a great nation." And unto his mother Hagar it was said, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.<sup>1</sup> The descendants of Ishmael have been multiplied exceedingly. His seed cannot be numbered for multitude. The history of the Arabs needs not to be detailed. They are universally known to be a wild people; their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them. In the words of Gibbon, the historian, which

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xvi. 10-12; xvii. 20.

strikingly assimilate with those of the prophecy, they are "armed against mankind;" and the distinct marks of prophetic truth which the Arabs yet exhibit, cannot be better represented than in the words of an intelligent and observant eye-witness, who thus describes them, after having visited an Arab camp, and examined the peculiarities of their race: "On the smallest computation such must have been the manners of these people for more than three thousand years. Thus in all things verifying the prediction given of Ishmael at his birth, that he, in his posterity, should be a wild man, and always continue to be so, though they shall dwell for ever in the presence of their brethren.<sup>1</sup> And that an acute and active people, surrounded for ages by polished and luxurious nations, should from their earliest to their latest times, be still found a wild people, dwelling in the presence of all their brethren, as we may call these nations, unsubdued and unchangeable, is indeed a standing miracle—one of those mysterious facts which establish the truth of prophecy."<sup>2</sup>

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

BRIEF and incomplete as has been the summary view, given in the foregoing pages, of the Evidence of Prophecy, yet do not the joint clearness of the prophecies

<sup>1</sup> The Jews, the Edomites, the Moabites, Amalekites, and Ammonites were literally their brethren, being, like them, descendants of Abraham, and all neighbouring nations.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Ker Porter's Travels, vol. i. p. 304.

themselves, and the profusion of precise facts which show their literal fulfilment, bid defiance to the most subtle sceptic to forge or feign the shadow of a just reason to prove how they could all have been spoken, except by inspiration of God? The sins of men have caused, and the cruelty of men has effected, the dire desolations which the word of God foretold. Signs and tokens of His judgments there indeed have been, yet they are never to be found but where iniquity first prevailed. And though all other warnings were to fail, the sight of His past judgments, and the sounding of those that are to come, might teach the unrepenting and unconverted sinner to give heed to the threatenings of his word, and to the terrors of the Lord, and to try his ways, and turn unto God, while space for repentance may be found.

But naming, as millions do, the name of Christ, without departing from iniquity, there is another warning voice that may come more closely to them all. And it is not only from the desolate regions where heathens dwelt, which show how holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but also from the ruins of some of the cities where churches were formed by apostles, and where the religion of Jesus once existed in its purity, that all may learn to know that God is no respecter of persons, and that He will by no means clear the guilty. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."<sup>1</sup>

What church could rightfully claim, or ever seek, a higher title than that which is given in Scripture to the seven churches of Asia, the angels of which were the seven stars in the right hand of Him, who is the First and the Last—of him that liveth and was dead, and is

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 22

alive for evermore, and that hath the keys of hell and of death; and which themselves were the seven golden candlesticks in the midst of which HE walked? And who that hath an ear to hear, may not humbly hear and greatly profit by what the Spirit said unto them?<sup>1</sup>

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS, after a commendation of their first works, to which they were commanded to return, were accused of having left their first love, and threatened with the removal of their candlestick out of its place, except they should repent.<sup>2</sup> Ephesus is situated nearly fifty miles south of Smyrna. It was the metropolis of Ionia, and a great and opulent city, and according to Strabo, the greatest emporium of Asia Minor. It was chiefly famous for the temple of Diana, "whom all Asia worshipped," which was adorned with 127 columns of Parian marble, each of a single shaft, and sixty feet high, and which formed one of the seven wonders of the world. The remains of its magnificent theatre, in which it is said that twenty thousand people could easily have been seated, are yet to be seen.<sup>3</sup> But a "few heaps of stones," and some miserable mud cottages, occasionally tenanted by Turks, without one Christian residing there, are all the remains of ancient Ephesus.<sup>4</sup> It is, as described by different travellers, a solemn and most forlorn spot. The Epistle to the Ephesians is read throughout the world; but there is none in Ephesus to read it now. They left their first love, they returned not to their first works. Their candlestick has been removed out of its place; and the great city of Ephesus is no more.

THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA was approved of as "rich," and no judgment was denounced against it. They were

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. and iii.    <sup>2</sup> Rev. ii. 5.    <sup>3</sup> Acts xix. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Arundel's Visit to the Seven Churches of Asia, p. 27.

warned of a tribulation of ten days (the ten years' persecution by Diocletian), and were enjoined to be faithful unto death, and they would receive a crown of life.<sup>1</sup> And unlike to the fate of the more famous city of Ephesus, Smyrna is still a large city, containing nearly one hundred thousand inhabitants, with several Greek churches; and an English and other Christian ministers have resided in it. The light has indeed become dim, but the candlestick has not been wholly removed out of its place.

The CHURCH OF PERGAMOS is commended for holding fast the name of the Lord, and not denying his faith, during a time of persecution, and in the midst of a wicked city. But there were some in it who held doctrines, and did deeds, which the Lord hated. Against them He was to fight with the sword of his mouth; and all were called to repent. But it is not said, as of Ephesus, that their candlestick would be removed out of its place.<sup>2</sup> Pergamos is situated to the north of Smyrna, at a distance of nearly sixty-four miles, and was formerly the metropolis of Hellespontic Mysia. It still contains at least fifteen thousand inhabitants, of whom fifteen hundred are Greeks, and two hundred Armenians, each of whom have a church.

In the CHURCH OF TRYATIRA, like that of Pergamos, some tares were soon mingled with the wheat. He who hath eyes like unto a flame of fire discerned both. Yet happily for the souls of the people, more than for the safety of the city, the general character of that church, as it then existed, is thus described: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 8-11.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. ii. 12-16.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. ii. 19.

But against those, for such there were among them, who had committed fornication, and eaten things sacrificed unto idols, to whom the Lord gave space to repent of their fornication, and they repented not, great tribulation was denounced; and to every one of them was to be given according to their works. These, thus warned, while on earth, in vain, have long since passed, where all are hastening, to the place where no repentance can be found, and no work be done. "But unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not known the depths of Satan, I will put upon you," said the Lord, "none other burden."<sup>1</sup> There were those in Thyatira who could save a city. It still exists, while greater cities have fallen.

The CHURCH OF SARDIS differed from those of Pergamos and Thyatira. They had not denied the faith; but the Lord had a few things against them, for there were some evil-doers among them; and on those, if they repented not, judgment was to rest. But in Sardis, great though the city was, and founded though the church had been by an apostle, there were only a few names which had not defiled their garments. And to that church the Spirit said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." But "the Lord is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And the church of Sardis was thus warned—"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 2, 3.

The state of Sardis now is a token that the warning was given in vain; and shows that the threatenings of the Lord, when disregarded, become certain judgments. Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was a great and renowned city, where the wealth of Croesus, its king, was accumulated, and became even a proverb. But now a few wretched mud huts, "scattered among the ruins, are the only dwellings in Sardis, and form the lowly home of Turkish herdsman, who are its only inhabitants." As the seat of a Christian church it has lost—all it had to lose—the name. "No Christians reside on the spot."

"And unto the angel of the CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world."<sup>1</sup> The promises of the Lord are as sure as his threatenings. Philadelphia alone long withstood the power of the Turks, and, in the words of Gibbon, "at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia," he adds, "Philadelphia is still erect; a column in a scene of ruins."<sup>2</sup> "Of the whole population," says Canon Tristram,<sup>3</sup> "which is about 15,000, fully one-third are Christians of the Greek Church. There is still a Bishop of Phila-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 7, 8, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Decline and Fall, chap. lxiv.

<sup>3</sup> The Seven Golden Candlesticks. By the Rev. H. B. Tristram, F.R.S.  
Published by the Religious Tract Society.



delphia, and several churches. The Christians are permitted to ring their church bells, and to have religious processions, with privileges accorded to no other town in the interior of Asia Minor."

The circumstance that Philadelphia is now called Allah-Shehr, "the city of God," when viewed in connection with the promises made to that church, and especially with that of writing the name of the city of God upon its faithful members, is, to say the least, a singular concurrence. From the prevailing iniquities of men, many a sign has been given how terrible are the judgments of God; but from the fidelity of the church in Philadelphia of old, in keeping his word, a name and memorial of his faithfulness has been left on earth, while the higher glories, promised to those that overcame, shall be ratified in heaven; and towards them, but not them only, shall the glorified Redeemer confirm the truth of his blessed words, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God;" even as assuredly as Philadelphia, when all else fell around it, "stood erect," our enemies themselves being judges, "a column in a scene of ruins."

"And unto the angel of the CHURCH of the LAODICEANS write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and

white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shams of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."<sup>1</sup> All the other churches were found worthy of some commendation; and there was some blessing in them all. The church of Ephesus had laboured, and had not fainted, though she had forsaken her first love; and the threatened punishment, except she repented, was the removal of their candlestick out of its place. A faithless and wicked few polluted the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira by their doctrines or by their lives; but the body was sound; and the churches had a portion in Christ. Even in Sardis, though it was dead, there was life in a few, who had not defiled their garments; "and they shall walk with me in white," said the Lord, "for they are worthy."

But in what the Spirit said to the church in Laodicea, there was not one word of approval; it was lukewarm without exception; and therefore it was wholly loathed. The religion of Jesus had become to them as an ordinary matter. They would attend to it just as they did to other things which they loved as well. The sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross was nothing more than a common gift by man. They were not constrained by the love of Christ more than by other feelings. They could repeat the words of the first great commandment of the law, and of the second that is like unto it; but they showed no sign that the one or the other was truly a law to them. There was no Dorcas among them, who, out of pure Christian love, made cloths for the poor. There was no Philemon, to whom it could be said, "This church in thy house," and who could look on a servant as "a brother beloved." There was no servant who looked to the eye

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 14-18.

of his Father in heaven more than to that of his master on earth, and to the recompense of eternal reward more than to the hireling wages of a day; and who, by showing all good fidelity, sought to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. There was nothing done, as everything should be, heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men. The power of the world to come, and of that which now is, hung, as it were, even-balanced in their minds: each had its separate influence and weight, even to a scruple; and they were kept distinct, as if there should never be any interference between them, or as if they were to hang in separate scales.

This was given unto the world, and that unto God, as if these Christian men had been full of the faith that the revealed will of the Most High had no title to a supreme ascendancy over them; that all "the deeds done in the body" would never be brought to judgment, and that lukewarmness was requital enough for redeeming love. Their only dread seemed to be lest they should be righteous overmuch. And for fear of that, which would have been inconsistent with their character, though not with their profession, they disregarded the words of one who was wiser than Solomon, and who had laid down his life for their sakes: they did not strive to enter in at the strait gate; to be perfect was no purpose of theirs; there was no fighting in their faith, no running in their race, no wrestling in their warfare, no victory in their work. Yet they could show a goodly form or framework of religion, on which they had raised many a high hope.

They trusted to redemption through Christ, while they were not redeemed from sin, nor actuated by the love of God. They used the means of grace, but neglected the end for which that grace had appeared. They were rich

they thought, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing. But they wanted zeal; and all they had was nothing worth. Whatever they vainly imagined themselves to be, the Spirit knew them truly, and told them what they were, even wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They had done no evil they thought; but they did little good. And they neither felt nor lived as if they knew that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Their lukewarmness was worse, for it rendered their state more hopeless than if they had been cold. For sooner would a man in Sardis have felt that the chill of death was upon him, and have cried out for life, and called to the physician, than would a man of Laodicea, who could ~~certainly~~ count his even pulse, and think his life secure, while death was preying on his vitals. The character of lukewarm Christian, a self-contradicting name, is the same in every age. Such was the church of the Laodiceans. But what is that city now, or how is it changed from what it was?

Laodicea was the metropolis of the greater Phrygia; and as heathen writers attest, it was an extensive and very celebrated city. Instead of then verging to its decline, it rose to its greatest eminence only about the beginning of the Christian era. "It was the mother church of sixteen bishoprics." Its three theatres, and the immense circus, which was capable of containing upwards of thirty thousand spectators, the spacious remains of which (with other ruins buried under ruins) are yet to be seen, give proof of the greatness of its ancient wealth and population, and indicate too strongly that, in that city where Christians were rebuked, without exception, for their lukewarmness, there were multitudes who were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The amphitheatre

was built after the Apocalypse was written, and the warning of the Spirit had been given to the church of the Laodiceans to be zealous and repent; but whatever they there may have heard or beheld, their hearts would neither have been quickened to a renewed zeal for the service and glory of God, nor turned to a deeper sorrow for sin, and a repentance not to be repented of. But the fate of Laodicea, though opposite, has been no less marked than that of Philadelphia. There are no sights of grandeur or scenes of temptation around it now. Its own tragedy may be briefly told. It was lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot; and therefore it was loathsome in the sight of God. It was loved, and rebuked, and chastened in vain. And it has been blotted from the world. It is now as desolate as its inhabitants were destitute of the fear and love of God, and as the church of the Laodiceans was devoid of true faith in the Saviour, and zeal in his service. It is as described in his Travels by Dr. Smith, "utterly desolated, and without any inhabitant, except wolves, and jackals, and foxes." It can boast of no human inhabitants, except occasionally when wandering Turkomans pitch their tents in its spacious amphitheatre. The "finest sculptured fragments" are to be seen at a considerable depth, in excavations which have been made among the ruins.<sup>1</sup> And Colonel Leake observes,<sup>2</sup> "There are few ancient cities more likely than Laodicea to preserve many curious remains of antiquity beneath the surface of the soil. Its opulence, and the earthquakes to which it was subject, rendering it probable that valuable works of art were often buried beneath the ruins of the public and private edifices." A fearful significancy is thus given to the terrific denunciation,

<sup>1</sup> Arundel's Travels, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Journal, p. 252.

"Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

"Ho that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Each church, and each individual therein, was weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, according to their works. Each was approved of according to its character, or rebuked and warned according to its doings. Was the church itself pure, the diseased members alone were to be cut off. Was the church itself dead, yet the few names, in which there were life, were all written before God, and not one of those who overcame would be blotted out of the Book of Life. All the seven churches were severally exhorted by the Spirit according to their need. The faith delivered to the saints was preached unto them all; and all, as Christian churches, possessed the means of salvation. The Son of Man walked in the midst of them, beholding those who were and those who were not his.

By the preaching of the gospel, and by the written Word every man in each of the churches was warned, and every man was taught in all wisdom, that every man might be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. And in what the Spirit said unto each and all of the churches, which he that hath ears to hear was commanded to hear, the promise of everlasting blessedness, under a variety of the most glorious representations, was given without exception, restriction, or reservation, to him that overcometh. The language of love, as well as of remonstrance and rebuke, was urged even on the lukewarm Laodiceans. And if any Christian fell, it was from his own resistance and quenching of the Spirit; from his choosing other lords than Jesus to have dominion over him; from his

lukewarmness, deadness, and virtual denial of the faith ; and from his own wilful rejection of freely offered and dearly purchased grace, sufficient if sought and cherished, and zealously used, to have enabled him to overcome and triumph in that warfare against spiritual wickedness to which Christ had called his disciples ; and in which, as the finisher of their faith, he is able to make the Christian more than conqueror.

But if such, as the Spirit described them and knew them to be, were the churches and Christians then, what are the churches and what are Christians now ? or, rather, we would ask of the reader, what is your own hope towards God, and what the work of your faith ? If, while Christianity was in its prime, and when its Divine truths had scarcely ceased to reach the ears of believers from the lips of apostles, on whose heads the Spirit had visibly descended, and cloven tongues, like as of fire, had sat ; if, even at that time, one of the seven churches of Asia had already departed from its first love ; if two others were partially polluted by the errors in doctrine, and evils in the practice, of some of their members ; if another had only a few names that were worthy, and yet another none ; and if they, who formed the last and worst of these, thought themselves rich and increased with goods, and that they had need of nothing ; and knew not, that, being lukewarm, they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ; have you an ear to hear, or a heart to understand such knowledge ? and do you, professing yourself a Christian, as they also did, see no cause or warning here to question and examine yourself ?

What is your labour of love, or wherein do you labour at all for His name's sake, by whose name you are called ? What trials does your faith patiently endure ? What

temptations does it triumphantly overcome? Is Christ in you the hope of glory, and is your heart purified through that blessed hope? Where are the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance? Turn the precepts of the Gospel into questions, and ask thus, What the Spirit would say unto you, as He said unto the churches.

What the Spirit said unto primitive and apostolic churches, may suffice to prove that none who have left their first love, if ever they have truly felt the love of Jesus—that none who are guilty of seducing others into sin and uncleanness—that none who have a name that they live, and are dead—and that none who are lukewarm, are worthy members of any Christian communion; and that while such they continue, no Christian communion can be profitable to them. But unto them “is space to repent” given. And to them the word and Spirit speak in entreaties, encouragements, exhortations and warnings; that they may turn from their sins to the Saviour, and that they may live, and not die. But were there one name in Sodom, or a few in Sardis, that are the Lord’s, he knows and names them every one; and precious in His sight is the death of His saints. Some, on the other hand, may be sunk into the depths of Satan, though in outward fellowship with a church, were such to be found, as pure as once was that of Thyatira. Whatever, therefore, the profession of your faith may be, seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness—that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, who gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify and cleanse it. And whatever dangers may then encompass you



around, fear not—only believe; all things are possible to him that believeth.

It was by keeping the word of the Lord, and not denying His faith, by hearing what the Spirit said, that the church of Philadelphia held fast what they had, and no man took their crown, though situated directly between the church of Laodicea, which was lukewarm, and Sardis, which was dead. And dead as Sardis was, the Lord had a few names in it which had not defiled their garments—Christians, worthy of the name, who lived, as you yourself should ever live, in the faith of the Lord Jesus—dead unto sin, and alive unto righteousness; while all around them, though naming the name of Jesus, were dead in trespasses and sins. Try your faith by its fruits; judge yourself that you be not judged; examine yourself whether you be in the faith; prove your own self; and, with the whole counsel of God, as revealed in the Gospel, open to your view, let the rule of your self-scrutiny be what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Many prophecies remain untouched on. But were any gainsayers to ask for more obvious facts and some demonstrations of the truth of prophecy, you have only to look on these scoffers and mockers, and false teachers, who have come in the last times; who walk after their own lusts, who despise government, who are presumptuous and self-willed, and who foam out their own shame, to hear and to see the loud and living witnesses of the truth of God's holy and unerring word.<sup>1</sup> Such have been, and such are, the enemies of the Christian faith. Yet it calls even these from darkness to light, and from death to life, Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?

If you have seen any wonderful things out of the law

<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter iii. 8; Jude 13.

of the Lord, and have looked, though from afar off, on the judgments of God that have come upon the earth, lay not aside the thought of these things when you now lay down this little book. Treat them not as if they were an idle tale, or as if you yourself were not to be a witness—and more than a witness—of a far greater judgment which shall be brought nigh unto you, and shall be your own.

If in traversing some of the plainest paths of the field of prophocy, you have been led by a way which you knew not of before, let that path lead you to the well of living waters, which springeth up into everlasting life to every one that thirsts after it and drinks. Let the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be to you this well-spring of the Christian life. Let the word of God enlighten your eyes, and it will also rejoice your heart. Search the Scriptures, in them there are no lying divinations; they testify of Jesus, and in them you will find eternal life. Pray for the teaching and the aid of that Spirit by whose inspiration they were given. And, above all Christian virtues that may bear witness of your faith, put on charity, love to God, and love to man, without which you would be as nothing, though you understood all mystery and all knowledge. From the want of this the earth has been covered with ruins. Let it be yours, and however poor may be your earthly portion, it will be infinitely more profitable to you than all the kingdoms of the world, and all their glory. Prophecies shall fail; tongues shall cease; knowledge shall vanish away; the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up; but charity never faileth.

If you have kept the word of the Lord, and have not denied His name, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. But if heretofore you have been

lukewarm, and destitute of Christian faith, and zeal, and hope, and love, hear what the Spirit saith, and harden not your heart against the heavenly counsel, and the glorious encouragement given unto you by that Jesus of whom all the prophets bear witness, and unto whom all things are now committed by the Father. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

THE END.